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Buffy the Vampire Slayer

SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR
ON VAMPING FOR TV AND FILM

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ON BUFFY'S STUNTS

NICOLE DEBOER
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BLAIR WITCH'S
HEATHER DONAHUE

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 2



Femme Fatales

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Contents

AUGUST 20, 1999

Page 38

©1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2

THE BLAIR WITCH

"THE SCARIEST MOVIE SINCE 'THE EXORCIST'" WAS PRODUCED FOR

By PATRICK LEGARE

"I'm scared to sleep my eyes... I'm scared to open them."

This chilling line of dialogue is delivered by actress/improvisation impresario Heather Donahue, who's cast as a film director in **THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT**. The movie was produced for next-to-nothing. And it's mercilessly scary. Laura Schiff, *FF's* L.A. editor, describes it as



L. Heather Donahue & her two technicians literally research the Blair Witch myth. They're alone lost in the woods (R. craved by T. How scared was Donahue? "I was trying a big pee in my pants!"



"one of the most terrifying films ever made. I couldn't sleep without a night light. It was the most talked-about film at this year's Sundance Film Festival."

Femme Fatales/Cinefantastique staffer Mitch Permans gauges **BLAIR WITCH** as "probably the most frightening film I've ever seen. The fear was not on the screen, but in my mind. I'll change the horror genre's tone for many years to come. And that final scene...you don't want to look, but..."

Produced by Haxan Films, **BLAIR WITCH** was helmed by Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez on a cash-sheshring budget of \$15,000. And it has turned quite a tidy profit. Upon debating at Sundance, it was sold to Artisan Entertainment for a fee somewhere between \$1 and \$1.5 million. Matter of fact, it was the first film that tallied a sale at the annual conclave.

Set up as a "mockumentary,"

BLAIR WITCH opens with a title card that succinctly recounts the odyssey of three student filmmakers: Heather Donahue, Joshua Leonard and Michael Williams traveled into the Maryland woods to research the Blair Witch legend. They never returned. Their footage was recovered from beneath an ancient house, and the surviving, hand-held scenes—either from the POV of Heather or one of her companions—are the core of this cinema verite-chronicle.

For more than a year, the **BLAIR WITCH** directors auditioned hundreds of actors for the three lead roles. With a script that had no dialogue, improvisation was a prerequisite. "We wanted to see how they would think on their feet, knowing that we had this whole 'improv-method-filmmaking' approach for the film," says co-director Myrick.

Donahue's histrionic experience, traced to a strong, "conservatory-trained" theatre background, contributed to her casting. "I've done everything from Shakespeare to Mame!" she exclaims.

The actors' work schedule was limited to a less than two-week tenure. In preparation for their roles, Donahue and her co-stars had to turn their attention to the camera technology. "It was five days of a film school 'crash course,'" explains Donahue. "And then

we were sent out into the woods for eight days."

The three thespians were furnished with supplies and shuffled off into Maryland's Seneca State Creek Park. Though a short distance away, the directors and crew didn't come into contact with the actors. Myrick and Sanchez directed by disfiguring the cast into adhering to a Global Positioning System (GPS), which had been programmed to lead the actors to different points where notes were loaded into film canisters.

"We'd open up our little can, read our note—we weren't allowed to show our notes to the other—and then we'd do whatever our note said," Donahue discloses. "Nobody would know what we were supposed to do, if it was something we were just doing or if it was [direction from] one of the notes."

Donahue's character, who's shooting a documentary about the Blair Witch "myth," is abetted by the aforementioned Josh Leonard, who plays a camera operator, and "sound recordist" Mike Williams. The actress performs her on-screen alter ego as someone who's defensively irritating in her resolve to maintain a grip. She tries to stay in control of her situation, even though things turn haywire almost immediately. And her crew, convinced that Donahue is losing them in an increasingly hostile wilderness, turns mutinous.

"The atmosphere, with the three of us, is exactly what you see in the movie," Donahue says. "You're out there with two total strangers...and you're not sleeping much, and you're not eating much...we all really got cranky with each other on more than one occasion."

There's only a minimal amount of optimism and positive fraternization, evinced by an early scene in a hotel room: the characters are more than "acting out" an intoxication sequence.

Donahue admits a real-life acquir-

ITCH PROJECT

\$15,000. THE LEADING LADY'S MEMOIRS—READ AT YOUR OWN RISK.

tance influenced the conceptualization of her character: "I immediately thought of this woman who I had worked with on the first film I ever did—which was never completed.

"She was sort of this woman I'm playing. She tried to always convince you that she was in complete control of everything that was going on, when it was absolutely clear to everyone that she had no idea. But she really put on a good show. She was always trying to rally everyone."

But the attempts of Donahue's character, to rally the support of her two compatriots, fail miserably. Each day, they plunge deeper into the woods and into an increasing darker milieu; and, each night, the peculiar sounds and voices in the wilderness seem to draw closer to the trio.

Hi, I'm William Castle. This is not a gimmick, but a very serious warning: if you have not already seen THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT, the following information regarding the film's conclusion could impair your privilege to be "scared shittless" (quoting one reviewer). Hence, the FF management urges you not to read beyond this point...

The film surrounds the viewer with ominous signs of (supernatural?) dread: "civilization" doesn't surface until the unswerving climax, in which Heather and Mike follow the missing Josh's cries into a decrepit, old house. What they find are tiny handprints on the walls and some broken toys. The film then shifts into its final, heart-pounding—albeit ambiguous—scene.

Donahue recalls that, during the final day of shooting, the actors were transported by car to another park in Maryland. Sheltered within a tent, they were instructed how the characters would react to their rustic apoca-

"...The most frightening film I've ever seen," said a FF/CFQ critic. "It'll change the horror genre for years to come. The final scene—you don't want to look, but..."



Donahue turns the camera on herself in the emotionally raw "confessional scene." She's deciding a sequel "unless they offer me a stuffed of money."

lypes. Donahue was advised to, "Make peace with yourself and with anybody you feel you should make peace with." The result is a scene of Heather, crammed inside her sleeping bag, crying bitterly as the camera focuses on one of her eyes. The actress describes the resultant angst as her "confessional scene." One of the movie's most disturbing sequences, it's followed by those damned sounds and a gripping run to the house.

"That house, man...I've got to tell you, that was a scary house," says Donahue. "We had no idea that that house was there, we had no clue. [The directors] put us in this little camping area where we couldn't see a damn thing. They wake us up at night with 'the voice' and, following the voice, we see this enormous house. A house that you would never go into in broad daylight. Not only that, we go inside with all these wacky, creepy handprints and

the little, screwed-up, old kiddie toys and little mangled teddy bears—and then Mike runs downstairs, and I've got to chase him. At that moment, I was laying a big old poo in my pants!"

The film concludes as Heather's camera swivels into the basement. It focuses on Mike's back (sounds nondescript but its sinister). Then the lens swivels to the ground. Credits roll. So what is Donahue's explanation of this abrupt conclusion, which one may suspect was created in the editing room? "I have no idea," she admits. "To be honest, I didn't know that I got Mike in the shot. I didn't know if I was supposed to do that. Somebody at Sundance had a theory that I really liked: they suggested that Josh wasn't actually taken by the Blair Witch, [it was] that he and Mike were just really sick of me. So Josh ran off and Mike led me to this house, and Josh grabbed me [hence, the camera's POV freefalling to the ground] and Mike was standing in the corner waiting to finish me off!"

The intensity was still intact when Donahue screened the edited film for the first time. "I'm a fan of very few horror films," she says. "I like a really good, solid scare and there aren't a lot of horror films that do that to me. THE SHINING is an example of one that totally does. That little 'redrum' kid haunts my dreams to this day. When I initially screened BLAIR WITCH, I was so surprised to see things that were in it because I had completely forgotten about them."

As for her solo sobbing scene, "It's really hard for me to watch. It's that you never see yourself like that, when you're at your most basic."

Performance aside, Donahue was surprised by the film's positive critical reaction: "It's an odd film, aesthetical-

continued on page 66

By LAURA SCHIFF

©Betty Thomas and Jenno Taprig's Tall Trees Productions recently bought *Used Guys*, a so-far script written by Mickey Benbaum. Producer Julie Gladman chatted with me regarding the plot of the story. "It's set in the future, when women rule the world. Women shop for men kind of the way we shop for cars. There are all kinds of different models and, in a couple of years, you can trade yours in for an upgrade. The movie really follows the story of two guys, one of whom is a 'Bun' model—the sweet, sensitive type. The other is a 'Jerk' model, a sexy stud type.

"It's really a buddy movie about two guys who get traded in. There's also a romantic storyline. The film character is bought by a woman named Michelle and, ultimately, he thinks he has to choose between his growing love for her and his friendship with Jake. In the end, he has to rescue her and save the world. It's a high-concept adventure movie that's clever and really funny. It pokes fun at gender stereotypes, and it's about how people really shouldn't be pigeonholed."

Tall Trees previously produced *CAN'T HARDLY WAIT*, a coming-of-age perfection starring Jennifer Love Hewitt. According to Gladman, *USED GUYS* is currently undergoing script revisions. It's expected to be released by Columbia Pictures some time next year.

©Molly Ringwald and Jenkin Napier (*WILDSIDE*) have agreed to appear in *CUT*, an Australian teen horror film that also stars pop singer Kylie Minogue and Stephan Curry. In a plot reminiscent of *THE*

Director Betty Thomas (*PRIVATE PARTS*, *DR. DOOLITTLE*) is helming *USED GUYS*, a sex-related satire



Angel Boris (*BEVERLY HILLS 90210*) is juicy in genre films. She digs her *WARLOCK* Mondays here because "It's sexual explicit, it's fun to be over-the-top."

BLAIR WITCH PROJECT (page 4), a group of film students resolve to wrap-up an incomplete horror movie. It seems that the project had ground to a halt, years earlier, when the director was killed. Unaware that every attempt to resume production has resulted in murder, the students return to the original location within an isolated part of the country. Of course, chaos ensues. Look for Ringwald's role as a substitute teacher in *KILLING MRS. TINGLE*. Kevin Williamson's black comedy. It's scheduled for an August 20 release.

©Actress/model Angel Boris recently returned from Ireland, where she performed a plunk role in *WARLOCK 3: THE END OF INNOCENCE*. Boris was cast as Lisa, the friend of a femme (*HILLHARPER* Ashley Laurence) who, as her of a Celtic witchcraft legacy, inherits an

ancestral home. "A group of Ashley's friends, including me, show up at this house to have a big party," explains Boris. "The warlock who owns the house shows up as an architect. He has to get us, Ashley's closest friends, to give her up before he can get what he wants from her—he needs her witch's blood in order to take over the universe. Once the warlock gets a personal sense of ours, he has our soul and he tortures each one of us until we give her up."

Boris describes her character as "a sassy nympho, who's really into bondage and S&M. I really loved her because I'm pretty sexual myself, so it was fun to be kind of over-the-top with it." The film is tentatively scheduled for a Halloween debut.

Boris is also featured in *UFO Productions'* so-far actioner, *INTER-*

CEPTORS. "I play Jena, a scientist who is called in by the government to intercept an alien spaceship that's crashed in Mexico. This alien is a shape-shifter who haunts a group of scientists and then attacks us out of nowhere, taking over our bodies. There's some really wild special effects. My character is the only one who really knows what we're dealing with, and my instructions are not to tell anyone the true nature of our mission." **WISHMASTER** It's Holly Fields (7-11) also stars in the film, directed by Philip Roth. Check out Boris' fan club at the Trashy Lingerie web site (www.trashy.com). In addition to striking poses for that Hollywood boutique and Playboy, she's appeared in episodes of *BEVERLY HILLS 90210* as "Emma." Jason Fendley's selection.

©Director Kevin Sumnerfield (page 48) is currently casting *SHOTGUN MARY*. Scheduled for a September shoot, the movie is based on Ben Dunn's comic book (*Arctico Press*) about a shotgun-toting, motorcycle-riding vigilante nun. Vatican-trained as a nun to fight demonic forces, Mary left the holy order because she just couldn't deal with the celibacy thing. "We'll also be introducing other comic book characters," explains Sumnerfield, "such as *Antarctic's* *Warrior Nun Annika* and *London Night Studio's* *Polina*. One of our casting challenges is to find actresses who can potentially be spun-off into starring in their own films as these crossover characters." *SHOTGUN MARY* is expected to debut at the American Film Market in 2000. As we go to press, a script, written by London Night's Everette Hartsee, is in development. It will be distributed on home video by *The Aynian*, an L.A.-based operation organized by the producers at *KILLERS*.

©Caught up with author/actress Vivian Schilling (13) after her Saturn award-winning film, *SOULTAKER*, was graced on *MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000*. Schilling starred in the film and wrote its screenplay, for a couple of robots who survive to skewer genre movies, that's doubly joyful. In one *SOULTAKER* scene, a photo of Schilling aired in a plantation gown prompted Tom Servo to quip, "Hey, Tonya Harding is Scarlett O'Hara!" Ms. Schilling is not amused. Nevertheless, she was taking the snipe in stride when I questioned her. "I haven't seen the

MST-3K screening of *SOULTAKER*," she says, "but I've heard about it from various blends. As far as the Toriya Harding comparison, I feel like Nancy Kerrigan. I mean, Why me?! Personally, I always thought of myself as more of the Kristi Yamaguchi-type." In the movie's climax, Schilling's on-screen boyfriend professes his love for her with, "Oh God, you're so beautiful." Monitoring that scene, Crow T. Robot cracked, "Yep, [Schilling] wrote the script, alright!" The versatile scribe did, in fact, pen the film's dialogue, but denies writing the line in question, insisting it was "added-in" by director Michael Rios.

While Schilling has been hard at work on her second novel, *Quelus*, in which a woman's freak survival of a plane crash upsets the balance of Fate, "I've just come back from sequestering myself in the mountains for a month and a half," Schilling says. "While there, I finished a first draft. 910 pages and I'm currently in rewrites." Her previous novel, *Secret Prey*, was published by Truman Press and St. Martin's Press in 1996.

• French photographer Linda Tirlene, whose sensual work will be gracing the pages of *FF*, related a humorous incident that took place on the streets of Venice, CA. It seems that actress Jacqueline Lovell (5'7")—whose genre credits include *THE KILLER EYE* (7/12), *FEMALIN*, *HIDEOUS*, *HEAD OF THE FAMILY* and *EXOTIC HOUSE OF WAX*—attracted some unwanted attention during a recent photo shoot. "Jacqueline was undressing in the street, man!" exclaims Tirlene, "—taking off everything in the street! The cops were very nice, though." *Cops?* "We were in this little alley, and I had to change into five different outfits," explains Lovell. "I was rushing because it was going to start raining at any minute. I was changing out of this little panties-and-bra outfit into a bathing suit, and I was doing it very quickly. But it just happened that a car drove down the alley the second I pulled off my underwear! I guess they got mad and told the cops, and the cops came flying over, saying they heard we were taking naked photographs! I told them I was just changing and then that was it. The cops left and then they drove past me later when we were out on the beach. I was laughing and trying to look as sexy in the

continued on page 82

Jacqueline Lovell, *comely in KILLER EYE* (see video giveaway, page 26, poses for Linda Tirlene. The actor's status did a vanishing act in her L.A. street.



SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR VAMPIRE SLAYER

WITH HER *CRUEL INTENTIONS* DEBUTING ON VIDEO, SHE REBUFS THE "GOOD GIRL" STEREOTYPE.

By EDWARD GROSS

When a television series officially transforms into an "entertainment phenomenon"—with spin-offs and assorted franchises (check it out, a *BUFFY* challenge retails for \$25.00)—there's an inevitability that its star will profess a chronic fear of typecasting. Sarah Michelle Gellar declined to be locked into *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*'s virtuous persona; hence, she opted for femme fatale role in *CRUEL INTENTIONS*, last spring's modern re-tread of *DANGEROUS LIAISONS*...

"You just jump right in there, don't you?" Gellar howls. "It was definitely one of the big attractions... I've been playing Buffy for so long, and most of the characters I've done have been these good girls. It was time that I reminded people that I'm an actress and I can branch out. Obviously



It's the Vampire Slayer (Sarah M. Gellar) vs. The Master. "Buffy is definitely an optimist," explains Gellar.

only I'm no more Kathryn [Mertens], the character I play in *CRUEL INTENTIONS*, than I am Buffy. I'm an actress who plays these roles. And, contrary to popular belief, I am not a super hero. The thing about Kathryn was—well, not only was she the bad girl, but she was so well-developed. One of the first things I noticed about

Roger [Kumble's] script was how well-developed all of the characters were. They all had layers, they all had dimensions and they were smart. The dialogue just caught all of us. It's so rare to see dialogue written like that, for people our age—and in all of the characters."

But, sans adult accompaniment, the demographic that *BUFFY* appeals to was prohibited from lending their patronage to the movie. "*CRUEL INTENTIONS* was R-rated here," shrugs Gellar. "And I'm glad it's R-rated. My theory on movies, television, and everything is that it's the parents' decision. We raise our children, we teach them values, and it is our responsibility as a parent to prepare them for things. As a parent, you say, 'My child is either A, ready to see this movie, or B, not ready to see this.' And it should be your decision. At



SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR

"The director of CRUEL INTENTIONS was a little out there. Imagine the things that Ryan Phillippe and I said 'No!' to. We'd have to say, 'We can't do it....Well, maybe for the European version.'"

16, I would have been ready to see this movie. But there are a lot of 16-year-olds who aren't. And I think it's excellent if a parent wants to go see it with their child. Let's talk about these things. Let's realize that this isn't correct. When you look at what goes on in American high schools—I'm really shocked sometimes!—13-year-olds getting pregnant. It exists! It's very important that we can say, 'This is wrong.'

Gellar found out about the script for CRUEL INTENTIONS shortly after wrapping SCREAM 2. "And I fell in love with it," she enthuses. "I said, 'Someone find me [the film's screenwriter/director] Roger Kumble—I must meet with him. I have to do this movie.' And everybody was like, 'It's September, Sarah.' My other movies hadn't even come out yet, so no one knew [how well they] were going to do. And CRUEL INTENTIONS was a \$2 million movie at the time. I said, 'I don't care—I'm going to do this movie.'"

"So I went in one morning before production of BUFFY—and I never do stuff like this—and met [Kumble] at eight in the morning. I just said, 'I have to do this.' I basically put myself on the table and said, 'I want this. I must do this.' And then [producer] Neal Moritz came aboard, and I wasn't sure if that was a good thing or a bad thing. I have to tell you, I thought, 'Now, does this mean I'm going to get it or I'm not going to get it?' The way it worked was, I basically signed on to do [BUFFY] in September, knowing I wouldn't shoot [CRUEL INTENTIONS] until April—which was actual-

ly a little crazy because most people do not find their jobs that early. You never know what's gonna come to you. I kept reading scripts throughout, but nothing felt the same way to me as Kumble's screenplay did. We started rehearsing very, very early. We completed BUFFY on March 31, and CRUEL INTENTIONS started April 2."

Though impatience with the script, Gellar admits

Gellar at the premiere of CRUEL INTENTIONS, a sleazy melodrama initially slated for a \$3-million budget.



that Kumble occasionally insisted upon things that challenged her own liberality. "Roger has a sick mind," she grins. "He's a little out there. And there would be times where he'd say, 'I have a great suggestion! Why don't you do—la la la,' and [co-star] Ryan Phillipps and I would be like—[flashes an inquisitive expression]. So you imagine the things that we said 'No.' to. Sometimes we'd just have to say, 'Roger, we can't do that. Maybe for the European version, but not



Gellar on *BUFFY* (84). "This has been a tortuous year for the character," notes Gellar. "I'm looking forward to her growing a little and having a little happiness. Where's fun, Buffy?"

for the American version."

"But nine out of ten times, Roger was right on. It was a wonderful group effort, more so than anything else I've ever done. You worry when working with a director/writer/producer—the script is their words. So if you want to change them, there's always concerns to consider like, 'Am I going to insult them?' 'Do I need to tread lightly?' Roger's like, 'Ah, that sucks—get rid of it!' That's Roger's whole thing. He was so open. The big speech at the end, where Kathryn explains to Sebastian why she is the way that she is, went through so many incarnations. We'd been working on that for months. It became so many

different things throughout."

According to Phillipps, who had previously worked with Gellar on *I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER*, the actress has "evolved" since the last time they worked together. "I feel that there was a person last year, and there's a person this year," Gellar concurs. "I've known Ryan for about seven years. We were on soaps at the same time in New York, so I knew him when I was still in high school. And last year at this time, everything was scary. It was all really new to me, and my life was changing very quickly. And it's very hard. I lived my life for 20 years and, all of a sudden,

I'm supposed to change overnight. The rules are different. Things I can do, and places I can go, are different. It scared me a lot. To be perfectly honest, I didn't want to leave my house. And now, a year later, it's not so scary. My life is actually more normal than it was last year. I always ask my friends, 'Am I still the same? Is it still me?' And they say that, if anything, I'm almost more normal now because I crave that so much. I crave on Saturday night going to El Torrito, and going to karaoke and going to the movies. That's what I want to do, and it's exciting.

"And things happen. I went out with some friends a weekend ago, and we got

followed from the movies by like 50 people and they wound up at our hotel. And that stuff happens. But a year ago, I would have been beside myself and I would have wanted to go home. But now, I'm prepared for it and that's the difference."

Eager to perform a polarity of psyches, including the dark one she developed for *CRUEL INTENTIONS*, Gellar is confident she'll rebuff the Buffy image. "It's interesting," she says. "When I got off the soap, I figured that—for the rest of my life—I was gonna be fighting the stereotype of the bad girl. And then, oddly enough, I had suddenly found myself fighting the opposite stereotype [with *BUFFY*]. I had to prove to people that I could do something that I'd always done.

"That was interesting. If I'd just done movie after movie, it would have been hard to associate me with a singular character. The difference between television actors and film actors? You associate the television person with the character that he or she plays. You see them every week—they come into your home, they do interviews a lot more. And movie people, you see them on a big screen. Every time you see them, it's only for two hours and, each time, they're different. They're usually only promoting one movie."

But Gellar isn't Buffy-hating. Her TV series, currently in its third season, has spawned not only merchandising tie-ins (check out the pewter ashtrays, \$17.50) but *ANGEL*, a spin-off starring *BUFFY* ensemble players David Boreanaz and Charisma Carpenter. "The spin-off thing came very quickly," Gellar opines. "I think we all sort of felt that the Buffy-Angel storyline had been played out.

And you don't want to drag it out for five years. You want to do new stuff. You want to see Buffy experience things. It's been a very dark season and I'm a little tired of crying. Part of the thing for Buffy this year is that she trusted so many people so quickly, and she's really getting burned right now. And that's really hard for me, because Buffy was always the strong one. And it's very hard for me to believe this, when we all know it's wrong. So now we're building up to the big fight with the mayor, and we're building to the climax with Faith. What's nice is that next year, when Buffy goes to college, it's really fresh. There are really no continuing stories at that point. It's time for her to have a little bit of happiness."

And—yes, fans—the high school gang will remain together during their freshman college tour. "Just conveniently, the only Ivy League school in California happens to be in Sunnydale," Gellar beams. "It's been set up pretty well. This is all speculation, but, obviously, Willow and Oz have very high scores on the SATs. And it was set up in that episode where Buffy was surprised: she ended up doing very well on the SATs. So one would assume that Buffy, Will and Oz will all be in school together. One would assume Xander will not. Xander will probably be either still in high school or having an odd job. Hey, this is not BEVERLY HILLS 90210. Realistically, Xander cannot go to the same school. I'm gonna pass on Harvard and go to Sunnydale, and then the F student winds up in the same place? That's not gonna happen."

Something else isn't "game" happen: our heroine will not cup a cynical attitude, her contretemps with Angel notwithstanding. "The wonderful thing about Buffy is that she always sees things as 'the glass is always half full.' She's definitely an optimist," Gellar

SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR

"It's been a very dark season and I'm a little tired of crying. Buffy's getting burned right now: that's hard because she's always the strong one. Next year, when she goes to college, it's fresh."



"I fell in love with the script!" Circumventing stereotypes, Gellar played a vision with no CRUEL INTENTIONS. The movie, which earned two p.s. when A&E NEWS branded its proximity as a "negative" for teens, was only a marginal success.

muses. "And I think it will be very heartbreaking for her when [Angel] leaves, but it is the right thing and they really can't be together. And this has been a torturous year for Buffy. She's constantly questioning everything. He could become evil at the drop of a hat. And now there's this whole Faith thing—she doesn't know who to trust, anymore. It's been a really difficult year, and I'm looking forward to her growing a little and having a little happiness. Where's fun, Buffy?"

The one thing hindering Gellar's work on *BUFFY* with her feature films is adolescent angst. Both the actress, and the audience, can relate to the seismic environment of high school. "Oh, it's horrific," she concurs. "Let's be honest—it's

the most horrific time in life. In high school, kids are vicious for no reason. You're labeled with your reputation as a freshman, and it's virtually impossible to change that throughout all these semesters—you live like that. When modernizing *CRUEL INTENTIONS* from its original source material [Choderlos de Laclos' novel, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*], I think the only thing they could do was make it younger. What was shocking to the 1800's would shock nobody now. And if Kathryn and Sebastian would have been this dastardly no adults in 1998, no one would want to see it; it would be inexcusable, inappropriate. My junior high school time was very difficult. I went to a very expensive prep school in New York

City, and I went to school with Kathryn's and Sebastian's: privileged children with an excess of wealth, very young and a certain lack of parental supervision. I was a scholarship child who was working to subsidize the rest of my tuition. And, for that, I was an outcast....

"In that time period, anybody who's different is an outcast. High school and junior high school are usually about conformity. You're supposed to be like whoever the popular people are at the time, and that wasn't me. So junior high school wasn't fun for me. But I had an amazing high school experience. I went to a school called PCS—Professional Children School—which is made for children with irregular schedules. So I went to school with musicians from Juilliard, dancers from the School of American Ballet, actors, writers, gymnasts and children of famous people who would be ostracized normally because of that. And when you have all these people together—everybody was different, nobody was the same—there wasn't a norm to follow. And instead of having a regime, with the popular people and the nerds, people grouped off. If you didn't like somebody, you just weren't friends with them."

"I look at how many people I'm still friendly with. Tara Reid—she's in *CRUEL INTENTIONS*—and I went to high school together. And Ginger Williams, who's in the beginning of the film, was my best friend in high school. It's very interesting to see all those people. High school is the time when you should be developing your individuality, and I think it's so unfortunate that it's the time when you sometimes can't. It was great for me because I was really able to find myself very early. I think that happens to most kids in college or when you get out. So I'm thankful, every day, for my school experience." □

Buffy, Vampire Slayer

The usually reserved Joss Whedon, *BUFFY*'s creator/co-executive producer and occasional director, positively gushes when our conversation breeches the series' co-producer and staff writer, Marti Noxon: "She can write the shit out of this show! She's good and she's efficient. She's got this show in her blood in such a way that it sometimes puts more experienced writers to shame. Before Marti came on board, David [Greenwalt], Rob Des Hotel, Dean Batali, Ty King and I were carrying the bulk of the workload. Now I know that if we get in a bind—and we do, more often than not—I can always go to Marti and she can produce a good script in a very short amount of time. She is an absolute lifesaver."

Describing her function within Whedon's Mutant Enemy Productions, Noxon is a little more low-key: "I wrote six episodes last season. Part of the reason that I did so many is because we were trying to figure out who was working and who was not working. Some of our writers, like Ty King, live out of town, he lives in Seattle, and is more of a consultant writer. Also, last year, we had one man who didn't work out and he left right away. We also had a consulting producer whose own pilot sold right in the middle of all this, so he didn't stick around. He only wrote half an episode, then

MARTI NOXON, HEAD WRITER, ON SCARY EPISODES, ANGST, ADOLESCENCE AND ANGEL.

BY MITCH PERSONS



Sarah Heller's CRUEL INTENTIONS: Dialogue: "You the Marti lacking Brady of the Upper East side. My advice is to sleep with as many people as possible."

took off. Rob and Dean had already been on the show for one season, and I think they were considering moving on. That left David, Joss, and myself. That's not very many people. When you come right down to the crux of the matter, I was really the only one besides Joss and David who was left."

"I was nervous, because *BUFFY* was actually my first staff job. My father, Nicholas Noxon, is the head of National Geographic, Documentary Division and I used to hang around him all the time when I was a kid, because I always knew that I wanted to do something in the film business. But I found out that I really didn't want to be a documentary person. I found it very frustrating, what with watching and waiting for animals to do things—I wanted to give them direction!"

"I went to film school at UC Santa Cruz and when I graduated I worked in a bunch of different jobs in the industry, mostly as an assistant to a writer and then to a writer-producer and I just wrote a lot. I did spec scripts, both feature and television. I actually did have one produced, and that was for the show *LIFE GOES ON*. About three years ago I got signed by one of the bigger agencies for television and talent, and they passed my material to Joss at *BUFFY*. I met with Joss and David, and I thought it had gone miserably and I was never going to get the job. I couldn't tell if they liked me, but, much to



"I don't want to play the quasi-sensational dumb blonde," says Gellar, who almost declined her role in *I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER* ("I got that movie the same week that *BUFFY* [it premiered]"). *B. Gellar* on the *BUFFY* set with series creator Joss Whedon, who probes Gellar's aptitude: "If we get into a bind, she can produce a good script in a very short amount of time!"



JOSS WHEDON, "BUFFY" CREATOR

"Marti's good, efficient, an absolute lifesaver. She can write the shit out of this show—she's got this show in her blood in such a way that it puts the more experienced writers to shame."

my delight, they did.

"I think one of the reasons they liked me was because I had a real taste for the macabre. When I was writing spec scripts, most of them were ghost stories or had some sort of supernatural element in them. One of the specs I wrote was for *THE X-FILES*. I love that show. I have always been obsessed with ghost stories, and it seemed that David and Joss were able to pick that up. That is why *BUFFY* was such a great fit for me.

"They could also sense that I've had a love of the dramatic genre, with episodic shows like *PARTY OF FIVE* and *MY SO-CALLED LIFE*. I expressed to them my opinion, that those kinds of series can overstay their welcome because the people are always so overwrought. Taking straight drama and mixing it with horror/comedy, as David and Joss did with *BUFFY*, was my all-time favorite kind of writing.

"One thing that viewers may have noticed about our second season, and now our third, is that the segments—though still stressing the tempo-in-check elements of horror—had taken on a more serious and episodic quality. When you take a look at *BUFFY*'s first season, there were more stand-alone episodes—stories that dealt with different monsters, demons and so forth. You had the same recurring characters, but the show wasn't as dependent on those characters as they are now. Even so, we try to lighten things up if we feel that the story is getting a little too intense or too ponderous. Write a joke from Xander, an insult from Cordelia, or a twisted homily from Willow and the ten-

sion is dispersed. We're always very conscious of that, and even though the tone may now be darker—and the emotions of the characters deeper and more somber—there's still a whole lot to laugh about.

"For me, the emotional substance of *BUFFY* is very real. I don't think I'm alone in that assessment, either. People respond to it, even if they don't always know what's going on. This is particularly true for our younger audiences, the eight- to ten-year-olds. Sometimes that worries me. I expressed this to Joss one time in one of our breakdown meetings...

"I definitely considered *Possion*, with its grisly murder, an episode that was not for younger viewers. One of my favorite segments last year was *Lie to Me*, about the boy who wanted to become a vampire. That, too, was a little dark...a little too

Season, *BUFFY*'s head writer: "One reason the producers liked me was I had a real taste for the macabre."





Geller is stalked by a dead teen (Jenna Steiner) in *I Only Have Eyes for You*, a 3rd season script written by Noxon ("I've been obsessed with ghost stories").

disturbing for an eight-year-old kid but we do have that audience. Sometimes I think, "Oh, isn't that great?" and other times I think, "I hope their parents are watching with them." Certain episodes are great for them, and there's no problem; but others approach such adult themes that you just hope someone is there to talk to them so they don't get too scared. If I had seen some of those episodes when I was a kid, I would not have left the house. A couple of them, like Angel killing Jenny in *Possession*, I think would have sent me to sleep in my mom's bed for about a month...

"The killing off of Jenny was one of those surprises that we keep coming up with to keep our viewers on their toes. In one of the episodes I wrote, coincidentally titled *Surprise*, Jenny turns out to be a gypsy with

a vendetta against Angel. That was an idea that just grew on its own; it wasn't something that Joss, David and I were purposely planning on. I don't think we even thought, at the outset, that Jenny was going to be connected to Angel in any way. But it soon became obvious that she was.

"That's the wonderful

thing about learning from Joss. His mind is completely open to change. The characters are always allowed to do things that are unexpected. I think that's why our audience is fairly loyal, because they don't know what's going to happen—and sometimes neither do we! If I have learned something, and it's something that Joss is teaching me as a writer, it is never be afraid of the big reversal: the dramatic event. I'm sure viewers would be devastated if they knew how tenuous some of their favorite characters were. When Joss told us that Angel was going to murder Jenny, I stood up and said, 'No! You can't do that to us!' And Joss was so pleased because that was just the reaction he was looking for—something strong and emotional.

"So our characters are always turning out to be involved in stuff that I didn't think they were going to be involved in. But it's not always by design. A lot of times, as with *Gypsy Jenny*, we go, 'Ooh, wouldn't this be cool? Let's do it.'

"This is what happened with another one of my scripts, *Reunited*, *Bothered*

Buffy (Geller) meets Ted (John Miller), 12/29/97. "Taking straight drama & mixing it with horror/comedy was my all-time favorite kind of writing," explains Noxon.



MARTI NOXON

"Buffy is the hero but sometimes her decisions will be determined by total emotion or out of passion. That's what I love about these characters: they fight evil but they're still teenagers."

and *Beastlivered*. We had originally planned for the episode to be more slapstick than it actually was—a love spell, girls chasing Xander all over the place and him loving it. But it just wasn't working. Finally, I flashed on the idea of Cordelia initially rejecting Xander. When he goes to the witch for the spell, he isn't acting out of love. He wants revenge. He wants to reject the girl who has rejected him...

"The episode worked, I think, because I was able to bring my female perspective to the story. I know how it feels to be hurt like Xander was. I also know how it feels when you have this mad teenage crush on a boy. You feel you would do anything to keep him. That's how we ended up with all the women of the town literally fighting tooth and nail over Xander. I've been able to bring my experiences to the show, a girl's outlook on things. Not that Joss doesn't understand that because, for a man, he understands a woman's viewpoint better than anybody I've ever known who is male. But I think that there have been moments where I've said, 'Gee, girls just don't do that,' or, 'Yeah, she would do that.'

"I can venture to say that I have used my experiences to punch up the relationship between Xander and Cordelia. It's kind of pathetic, in a way, because their constant feuding—then making up—is very close to how my own romantic life was. Joss has often said to me, 'Marti, if you had had a happy teenagehood, you wouldn't be here.'

"Joss didn't know it when he said that but he was getting to the real heart of the

show, the thing that I really love about it. These people—Buffy, Oz, Xander, Willow, Cordelia—they are teenagers. They do stuff that isn't very smart, just as most of us do when we are that age. When I was trying to decide if I wanted to take this job, which wasn't a very hard decision, I hadn't seen the show. So I watched the Angel episode, when Buffy is fighting Angel and she bares her neck to him and says, 'Take me if you can, go ahead and kill me if you can.' I thought, 'This is the coolest thing I've ever seen because she's the hero, but she's an adolescent and she's going to make decisions—sometimes they'll be determined out of total emotion, or out of passion, as opposed to her head. And that makes it that much more interesting. And that's one of the things I love about these characters: they're fighting evil, but they're still teenagers. When Xander did his spell, he wasn't making a good decision, he was making a rotten decision—for rotten, selfish, stupid reasons—which is pretty much the biography of a person of years 13 through 25. Including yours truly.' □

The Slayer and her sugar: Xander (J. Nicholas Brendon) and Angel (David Boreanaz, b). "I've been able to bring my experiences and female perspective to the show," noted Mr. Moore.



Sophia, Vampire Slayer

LAUNCHED AS HONG KONG'S CHOP-SOCKY SIREN, SHE'S STEALING SCENES ON "BUFFY"—BUT YOU'RE NOT (YET) AWARE OF IT.

By JAKE WOODS

Weighing in barely over 100 pounds, the 5'4" Sophia Crawford wears double hats: stunt woman & actress. "I was introduced to Sophia on the set of *BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*," recounts Craig Reid, *FP* staffer and fight choreographer. "She doubles for Sarah Michelle Gellar on the show. On the day we met, Sophia had to perform a pretty risky stunt but was very calm and cool—just the sort of thing you wouldn't expect from a beautiful blonde, who could very well play a lead on that series."

"Sophia's educated and very articulate, and has absolutely no pretensions, not at all self-absorbed. She's a stunt woman who learned martial arts for the movies—she's not a competitive martial artist. Her career really started off when she played the 'token foreigner' in Asian and Hong Kong movies..."

Though the British-born actress was delivered as one of a set of triplets, neither Crawford nor her siblings have suffered an identity crisis. "One of us is an environmentalist, one a graphic designer and I'm a stunt



BUFFY: Sarah M. Gellar & Crawford. "Initially, 3 women auditioned for Sarah. She liked the way I moved, so the job devolved down to me. I was just in contact."

woman," she abhors. "We couldn't be much more different."

Encouraged to be independent, a 17-year-old Crawford and one of her sisters apprenticed themselves with a global odyssey. "Initially, it was a six-month bus trip across Europe and into India. But once we started, we were having such an incredible time that it just went on and on. We'd meet other travelers who had just been somewhere and they'd tell us how great it was, and we would have to go there, too." Upon their arrival in Thailand, the sisters split up. Developing a fondness for Asian culture, Crawford landed a job at one of Bangkok's luxury hotels as a tutor of English. Her sister rerouted to South America.

Crawford's beauty blonde tresses and natural athleticism prompted her casting in martial arts films produced in Thailand. Minor roles included a gig in *KICKBOXER*, one of Jean-Claude Van Damme's vehicles. The crews, particularly stunt performers, were of Chinese descent. "And they would keep telling me that I should get out of Thailand and come to Hong Kong,



Created poses for
PP photographer, Denise
Duff. "This is me in my
'slayer' mode. I love
working with Denise,
she has a vibrant
personality and a great
eye; she sees the
worldwide & knows what
to do with background."



where there were a lot of films being made," says Crawford. "As a foreigner, I was having some trouble getting permits to continue working in Bangkok. Since I was a British citizen and Hong Kong was a British colony at the time, I knew that I wouldn't have those problems."

Emigrating to Hong Kong in the late '80s, Crawford was promptly drawn into the country's boom period of filmmaking. "I was overwhelmed by the amount of action in their films, and by the fact that I could be involved in it," she says. As a result of her diminutive height, Crawford doubled for Asian actresses. But her tanned, bombshell luster rendered Crawford into a femme fatale with unique visual flair. During a five-year period, she appeared in 36 films.



L. Taking a pose for the DARK KEN-OS poster. T. On "RUFFY's graveyard set" with stunt coordinator & "soulmate," Jeff Pratt. "Jeff & I met at a screening of MARTIAL OUTLAW. He knew about all my Hong Kong films."

While honing her physical prowess during the embryonic stage of her career, Crawford admits, "I was no martial artist by any means. But I was petite and blonde, and they liked my look. I was very lucky. A few people took me under their wing and trained me." She tallied experience with members of the Jackie Chan Stunt Team and

earned certification within the venerated Funky Action Stunt Team. Eventually adapting an aptitude for variable styles of combat and weaponry, Crawford developed a personal and professional rapport with one of Hong Kong's popular female stars, Daisi Do Yukari (aka kickboxer Yukari Oshima). Assuming the role of Crawford's manager for the duration of the Hong Kong tenure, Yukari appeared with her Brit friend in a profusion of movies, e.g. **BEAUTY INSPECTORS**, **STORY OF THE GUN**. "In Hong Kong films, I got cast as Caucasian villains," recalls Crawford. "I was usually the villain's girlfriend and would come out at the end to fight, though I also got some cop roles. And I was hired for a few vampire parts, which is kind of funny now that I'm on **BUFFY**."

"Women are prolific in Hong Kong films. Think of it as an equal 'action' opportunity, since the same amount of fights are apportioned to females and males. But over here, one of my fight scenes was cut in a certain project because the male lead gnawed me as comparatively 'too good.' And, quite often, women in U.S. films aren't photographed correctly. As an example, sample Bridgette Wilson in **MORTAL KOMBAT**: her fight scenes drew laughs from audience—I mean, she should have been doubled."

Though impassioned about working within Asia's chop-socky commerce, Crawford—circa 1993—couldn't ignore a deadline that threatened to end it all: within four years, Hong Kong would lose its status within the British realm and revert back as property of mainland China. "There were only about a dozen Caucasian performers, and already we could see substantial changes starting to happen in the movie industry," sighs Crawford. "We knew that once the Chinese regained control, there would be more censorship and probably very little

SOPHIA CRAWFORD

"When we first went out to Torrance High, the kids couldn't have cared less about **BUFFY. Now we have to be surrounded by security because those kids think it's the coolest show on TV."**



F. Debonating (A)X. 1993 ("The film will be cut 1/2 actors with a Hong Kong team"). F. "With the GB Men in **BUFFY**'s *Go Fish* episode. The costumes were extremely hot. The heat in the water tank was cranked-up and some people passed out. At Cast in a Hong Kong pic, she's rigged w/ a flying harness for a wire pig.



work for Caucasians." She had no other choice than to vacate her familiar environment. "Many of the top stars were already starting to leave Hong Kong. Daisi Do Yukari tried to convince me to join her in the Philippines, but I decided to come to L.A."

Crawford had speculated her relocation to the West would be fraught with another round of professional trailblazing. But the timing could not have been better: "I had no idea the kind of cult following Hong Kong movies had in this country. A lot of filmmakers, and especially stunt people, were huge fans of Hong Kong action films and were really eager to work with someone who came from that training ground."

Her first job in the U.S. was an acting stint on the syndicated series, **KUNG FU: THE LEGEND CONTINUES**. Making the transition from Hong Kong to Hollywood induced one startling modification. "In my Asian films, I always did the dialogue in Cantonese. It wasn't brilliant Cantonese



but that's what I did. At first, it was quite strange for me to act in English." Though she didn't work with series star David Caradine ("He was in hospital at the time"), Crawford did interact with the guest stars, all veteran TV actors: "Robert Vaughn [**MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.**] was in it. I played the rebellious daughter of Patrick Macnee

[THE AVENGERS]. Ian Ogilvy was also in it, which was a thrill for me because I had grown up watching him as THE SAINT on British TV. It was really pretty funny that I started out in Britain, came three quarters of the way around the world and ended up in the U.S. with these wonderful British actors."

Crawford prioritized an acting career but was reluctant to lose her trade as a stunt woman. Ironically, in Hong Kong's cinema, the most celebrated luminaries function as actors who perform stunts. Crawford was quickly dissuaded from adhering to this duality. "Yes, you could do both in Hong Kong," she smiles. "In fact, it was encouraged. But here, they won't let the actor take the risk. It's two distinct jobs, actor or stunt person, and there is practically no crossover."

Accustomed to cost-restrictive films, Crawford smoothly slid into LA's cottage industry. Producer Roger Corman gave her a role in NIGHT HUNTER, a vampire conception starring Dean Cain the Dragon* Wilson. Her engagements in MISSION OF JUSTICE and SWORD OF HONOR reunited Crawford with Jeff Pruitt, the stunt coordinator for KING FU: THE LEGEND CONTINUES. Pruitt pulled double duty on SWORD, organizing stunts and playing Crawford's brother. Over the next few years, their relationship blossomed...

Signed-on to supervise stunts for a youth-oriented TV series, Pruitt immediately conferred with Crawford: "Jeff wasn't sure that I would want to do it since it was off stunt work. He knew me more as an actress who did stunts, rather than vice versa. But he was familiar with my experience from Hong Kong, that I could work on wires and snap into convincing martial arts poses, which was really important for the show." The show turned into MIGHTY MORPHIN

SOPHIA CRAWFORD

"I like the way [my nude scene] in SWORD OF HONOR came out. It was pretty tasteful, and I'm not really opposed to doing something like that if the story doesn't revolve around my nudity."



Asian productions: 1) Makeup is applied to Crawford for ANGEL. 2) Hugging in her 1982 DEATH co-starring Yuen Wah and Tommy Yung. "In the Hong Kong films, I was cast as Caucasian villain, usually the villain's girlfriend. And I was hired for a few vampire parts, which is kind of funny now that I'm on BUFFY."



POWER RANGERS, a cash cow that spawned franchises (including action figures that turned competitive Christmas shoppers into predators, a scenario spoofed in JINGLE ALL THE WAY).

During the next year, Crawford worked almost exclusively as a double for the Pink Ranger, whose more

societal, non-camouflaged alter ego was portrayed by perky Amy Jo Johnson. Crawford's obligations also extended to live appearances, which she describes as "a little odd. It would be in something that popular and he almost totally anonymous. When I was doing the live events, I wasn't allowed to talk because of

my accent. For some of these young girls, the Pink Ranger was their first female action hero and you couldn't break their hearts by destroying that illusion; they thought I was Amy Jo. So I'd just shake hands and do autographs and have to ignore their questions. I remember a little girl who, like a chimpanzee, attached herself to my leg until her mother pulled her off. She completely idolized the heroine whom I portrayed."

Crawford reprised the character in a spin-off, POWER RANGERS: THE MOVIE. The film's most spectacular stunt belongs to the Yellow Ranger, who—pounded 30 feet into the air—bounces off a building and drops, face-first, onto a concrete floor. Crawford relates that she "had to sleep in at the last minute on that one, because the person who was supposed to do it just wasn't comfortable with the stunt. I mean no criticism of her. The most important consideration is that you feel comfortable with how the stunt works. She didn't and I respect that. It was a ratchet gag, a wire attached to a high-speed pulley that jerks you off your feet. I'd done quite a few of them in Hong Kong, so I was okay with it. It knocked the wind out of me, which is kind of scary, but I love stuff like that. I'm into that [laughs]."

Not long after wrapping the film, Crawford was reacquainted with Pruitt for a feature produced in Australia. They concluded one working day by dating. These days, reveals Crawford, the couple share the same home and a set of engagement rings: "Jeff and I haven't had the time to get married yet, it seems like we're always working. But we have set a date. When the time comes, we both know that we'll just take off to the Caribbean for something simple and very romantic."

Only two years before signing with BUFFY, Crawford played a recurrent role on the short-lived WMAC

MASTERS. The TV series, which Crawford describes as "kind of a low-budget **MORTAL KOMBAT**," was shot on the back lot of Universal Studios in Florida. The actress was cast as Chameleon, a heroine who had the peculiar ability to change the color of her skintight costume to match her mood. The character was one of 18 martial artists who competed for something called the Dragon Star. For the duration of each half-hour episode, "there were two or three fights plus a scene in what they called the Inner Sanctum, where we all trained. There would be a little dialogue there to set up the characters and the conflicts, and then it was on to the next fight. It was pretty hokey. I worked on it for three months, a total of 13 episodes. Some toy licensing was in development, including a doll of myself as Chameleon, but the show's cancellation killed any kind of tie-ins." A pity, not since **SHEENA** had a curvy kiddie show queen united fathers and sons for 30 minutes.

Then along came **BUFFY**. Pruitt landed a job as stunt coordinator and brought Crawford on board to double for the show's star. Admitting that she never expected the TV series to sustain any longevity, Crawford recalls, "We'd shoot some exterior school stuff at Terrance High and, on the first episodes, the kids at the school would keep saying, 'Why are you making a TV series out of the **BUFFY** movie?' They had all seen the 1992 movie, and couldn't imagine why anyone would want to see more of it. Of course, the movie was never what its screenwriter, Joss Whedon [creator of the TV series], had in mind."

"When we first went out to Terrance High, the kids couldn't have cared less. Now, we have to be surrounded by security because those same kids think it's the coolest show on TV."

But the series' success has severely constrained



Tab, Crawford trained with members of the Jackie Chan Stunt Team. "When I arrived in Hong Kong, I was no martial artist by any means. But I was petite, blonde; they liked my look. I was overwhelmed by the amount of action in their movie."



Crawford's lifestyle: "Typically, we work an eight-day schedule. A lot of the show takes place at night, which finds our day starting around 1 p.m. and ending about 2:30 a.m. It's always very rushed, with a lot of compromises because we just can't do everything in the time we have. Fortunately, we have a great crew and cast. On a lot of other shows, the cast will head for the trailers when the stunt team comes on. It's kind of a 'us' and 'them' world with little appreciation for what stunt performers deliver. It's not that way on *BUFFY*. The cast watches us do the stunts. They cheer us on when it's tough, they applaud when we get it right and show genuine concern when someone gets banged around a bit as a result of a

SOPHIA CRAWFORD

"In *Ear Shot*, a *BUFFY* episode, a student arms himself with a rifle and climbs up the school's clock tower. Buffy resolves it all by telling him that counseling is nothing to be ashamed of."



R: "My *DARK MEDIUM* pic for *Proving Device* Duff. For 3 hours, I was pasted with 3 layers of latex. It was incrementally stripped off during our shoot." T: *Among WRAC MASTERS*.

mistake. It makes it much easier to give your all when you are surrounded with that kind of attitude."

Nevertheless, her craft encompasses genuine scary stuff that isn't included in the scripts: "There was a simple stunt where I walk into a net. It was supposed to spring up, lifting me about eight feet off the ground." Crew members had deposited too large a counterbalance on the net, roughly 300 pounds, to offset Crawford's 100-pound body. Pruitt questioned the

technology, but was informed "there wasn't time to get something lighter. When the net was sprung, it catapulted me about 35 feet into the air. I should have still been within the net, but when I threw out my arms there was nothing but open air." Flailing her arms as she fell, the stunt woman managed to snag the lip of the net and coast to the ground. "It was very close. If I hadn't managed to grab it, it would have certainly been a serious injury, probably fatal. Jeff had a moment there when he thought he was going to lose me, and he knew then that he didn't want that to ever happen. He proposed that same night."

Reaffirming Craig Rodd's observations, Crawford notes that her physical prowess has been limited to the "reel" world. "I've been in some competitions," she explains, "but never a real fight. I have no idea what I would do. And I've never had to get physical with someone who was coming on too strong. I've always been able to do that verbally. The closest I've ever come to a real confrontation was in Hong Kong. This guy came up behind me and snatched my purse. I spun around and did a couple of real quick martial arts moves on him, and then I just started laughing. It seemed so silly, like something out of one of my movies. The guy just stared at me, then he started laughing too. He dropped my purse and ran away. I've pretty much decided that's what I'm going to do if something like that ever happens again. I'm just going to run away."

Most of Crawford's post-Asian gigs have been related to stunt work. She recalls that the physical challenges of the aforementioned *SWORD OF HONOR* (1994), an Australian production, included working without a wardrobe: "I quite liked the way [my nude scene] came out. It was pretty tasteful, and I'm not





L: Chen starred as "Chenstar" in the short-lived **DRAGON MASTERS**. "It was a children's TV show, a low-budget **MORRIS KOSMAK** horror series, competing for the Dragon Star, Night on the Universal back lot. Toy Blessing was in the works for a bit of myself, but the show was canceled." **R:** With the series' star, **Joe San Pak**.

really opposed to doing something like that as long as the story doesn't revolve around my nudity." She acknowledges that, while negotiating for past films, producers tried to compromise her into performing nude scenes. "I've turned down jobs because I could see that all they were after was a T&A thing," explains Crawford. "I'm just not interested in going in that direction."

I'm not opposed to it necessarily, but I want it to be classy, subtle—not in your face."

When I query her about a starring role in **DARK NEXUS**, a film scheduled to be helmed by Pruitt, Crawford offers barely a leak: "It's sci-fi...has something to do with Roswell and Area 51...something happens internally." End of story.

Postscript: In her sum-

marization of **BUFFY**, Crawford abridges the series' inherent message to "be independent, strong, focused and motivated. Jesse Whedon's own boarding school experiences are reflected in the show."

A background radio cuts into our conversation: an announcer alerts the public to a massacre at Columbine High School. "Dreadful," exclaims Crawford. "This has

everything to do with the availability of guns...It's so ironic. In next week's **BUFFY** episode, *Far Shot*, a student arms himself with a rifle and climbs up the school's clock tower. But everything is resolved because Buffy tells him, "We care about you. Don't feel isolated." And then she tells him, and the audience, that counseling is nothing to be ashamed of." □

THE MIGHTY MORPHEE POWER RANGERS: Crawford (5) "most doubled" for Amy Jo Johnson's Pink Ranger. "I did some live appearances wearing the suit & the helmet. I didn't open my mouth or my British accent would've killed the 'Amy Jo' emulative." **R:** With stunt coordinator Jeff Pruitt at a Bronson Canyon location.



CHARLIZE THERON



It's been over a year since Charlize Theron, actress/*Vanity Fair* cover girl, wrapped **MIGHTY JOE YOUNG**, a remake of the 1949 classic about a woman and her companion—an overstated simian—who are exploited and nearly defeated by civilization. Not unlike its precursor, the '98 **JOE** was not a boxoffice bonanza. But making a transition to the video market—where it's generating substantive revenue—the film leaned on an ad campaign stressing not only the big ape, but an inset photo of Theron clad in her trademark threads: a constructive, sleeveless summer blouse. Though bristling from *Playboy*'s "unauthorized" publication of her nude photos back in April, Theron fondly recalls production of her family film.

"I didn't know about the original **MIGHTY JOE YOUNG**," she explains. "I read the script for this one and then saw the original. At that time, the script for this one was not the greatest I've ever read. But once I saw the original film, and I finally got into a room with director Ben Underwood, you see, he refused to meet with me because he didn't know about my history. He knew me as the 'bombshell' in **TWO DAYS IN THE VALLEY**. Finally, when we met and I spoke to him and heard his vision, and where he wanted to take the film, there was so much potential. I really wanted to be a part of it."

"But it was very different for me because I usually pick my parts. I have, except for this, always played char-

BEAUTIFUL WOMEN: THE FEMME FATALE VS. HOLLYWOOD BIAS.

BY CHUCK WAGNER



Theron and **MIGHTY JOE YOUNG**: Tending at the headoffice, the fire has belted huge profits on video. "I just knew that if the relationship between me and Joe wasn't something you could believe, then the film would have been nothing."

acters that I don't really have an extensive knowledge of, as to their lives and their personalities. That's what attracted me to them. This was the first time that I've wanted to play somebody who is so reminiscent of my own life."

Not unlike Jill Young, her **JOE** heroine, Theron "grew up and was educated in Africa. My first language was Afrikaans, so please excuse my grammar [No apology is necessary, her grammar is perfect] I was an only child on a farm in South Africa. My parents ran a road construction company, so the only means of entertaining myself was in making friendships with animals. It had a huge impact on my life, so I was immediately able to see the relationship between my character, Jill, and **Mighty Joe Young**."

There was homage in the remake, notes Theron, to the original **MIGHTY JOE YOUNG** which debuted half a century ago. "We updated the film, but there's a moment in this version that kind of celebrated that this was a movie originally set in the '40s. We weren't afraid to go back in certain places. I like the fact that we paid tribute to that."

Terry Moore, who played Jill Young in the '49 release, performed a cameo role: she's seated at a nightclub table with Ray Harryhausen, the original **JOE**'s special effects craftsman. Moore sees Theron and muses, "That girl reminds me of someone." Harryhausen replies, "You, when we first met."



"Stuff that you get is what you don't want, and what you want is what you don't get. It's the story of every pretty girl's life: 'Do you have the talent to back it up?'"

"Berry was great," smiles Theron. "She came up to me and said, 'You're a perfect Jill.' And that was enough for me. I never intended to walk into this film and try to fill her shoes, or take her place—or anything like that."

Jill's role, in fact, is something of the pivot in the film. "I just knew that if the relationship between me and Joe wasn't something you could believe, then the movie was nothing," says Theron. "It was something I really paid a lot of attention to and really wanted to succeed in, as far as making it something almost surreal but not patronizing. For instance, humans can be with animals. I understood this because I had relationships like that. It sounds ridiculous but those were very profound experiences that I've had. I had to draw on that."

"Also, Joe was 'real.' It's just like when you play a husband and wife, and you want to create familiarity like a couple who's been together years and years. You have to find something from your personal life that fills that spot, and I needed an image in my head of somebody that I wanted to care for and take care of that much. That took soul-searching."

Whose image did she draw upon to facilitate a rapport with Joe?

"Oooh, I can't say!" Theron grins.

Does her beauty preclude more challenging roles?

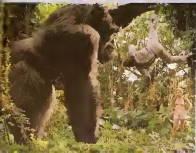
"I wouldn't want it any other way!" Theron wryly replies. "Of course, after a while, it gets frustrating, especially when you know you're capable of doing it, and you're not given the chance because of a physical

appearance. It's so ironic that people freak out when they hear I was in **MIGHTY JOE YOUNG**—me, 'the girl from **TWO DAYS IN THE VALLEY** playing the [virtuous] African girl'! And, like I said, Jill Young is the closest thing I've ever played to myself. I mean, I stepped in cow doo 90% of the time as a child and, all of a sudden, I'm in heels!

"The offers that I've accepted, where people actually come to me and offer, are so few. Two movies—that's it, when it comes to projects that have been personally offered to me that I really wanted to be a part of. Everything else has been 'Please, please, please' and going in the room with blazing guns and having to prove myself. That's just how movies are. The stuff that you get is what you don't want, and what you want is what you don't get. But I

continues on page 50

7. Flaming rave reviews in **THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE** as a spouse imperiled by Satan; Theron notes, "The dark stuff, to me, is very challenging and right up my alley!" 8. Confronting **MIGHTY JOE YOUNG** to put the drop on Bill Paxton



Theron's homage to Fay Wray: "I had to create a familiarity with JOE, like a couple who's been together for years."



DEV

HOT AS SATAN'S SIREN

By MITCH PERSONS

Back in 1947, Ronald Colman earned an Oscar for his performance in *A DOUBLE LIFE*. He portrayed Anthony John, an actor whose professional roles consume his private life. If he played a romantic lead, the off-stage John was affable and charming. If cast in a melodrama, his persona was morose and difficult. Engaged for a performance as *Othello*, John transforms into the very embodiment of the jealous Moor, even to the point of insisting that a harmless young waitress (Shelley Winters) is his unfaithful Desdemona. Tragedy tonight.

Tamara Tunie, unlike Mr. John, will not be inhabited by her screen incarnations. Good thing, too: sample her role as the terrifying socialite-cum-demon in *THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE*. But she was more sardonic as Charise Sheen's receptionist/conscience in *WALL STREET* and as the disembodied narrative voice in *EVE'S BAYOU*. Off-screen, there's no pretense of a duality.

Tunie is in control of her life and career. "But I wasn't always like that," admits the Harlem resident. "I think my resolve to take charge of my life start-

1: Tamara Tunie strikes a pose for Duane Polons. 2: Her "sleazy" scene in *DEVIL'S ADVOCATE* with Cherise Theron. "Shot on a closed set. I paid the embarrassed actress into touching my breasts."



IL'S ADVOCATE

TAMARA TUNIE SPARKED WITH KASI LEMMONS AND BRIAN DE PALMA.

ed after I had completed a European tour of the stage show *Bubbin' Brown Sugar*. I had never been in a film, only theater, including a stint with Lena Horne in *Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music*. As happens in this business—many times!—you kind of get pigeonholed, and people think of you in a certain way. I was doing nothing but stage work and people thought, 'Well, she's a stage actress,' so I made a conscious decision not to do theater for a while. I would focus on film and television. And when I made that decision, almost immediately afterward, I heard about a film that was being made called *SWEET LORRAINE*. I auditioned and got a featured role in it.

"I firmly believe that you have to commit to a decision fully and completely, and that's when things change for you. It may not necessarily work out the way you envisioned it, but something absolutely positive—and maybe even better than you thought—is going to come from it.

"Success is a mixture of faith and physics: faith in one's ability to rechannel your strengths into a specific direction or a specific project, and physics in that thought plus energy are going to amount to something.

"A lot of people are afraid to take the first step toward a goal because the thought of it is just too overpowering. But when you're looking at the big picture, you really do have to set your goal and take that first step toward making it happen. I have this conversation a lot with my husband, Gregory Generali. He's a jazz vocalist, which is a very specialized occupation. He chose the music business and that was his first step, just like auditioning for *SWEET LORRAINE* was mine.

"That first plunge is supposed to be a doozy, but I consider myself very fortunate in that I slid into my film career almost effortlessly. *SWEET*



Tunie poses for Palazzo. "I got into this business because I love acting, and I love doing stuff with some integrity. My own approach to life is, 'Go for the best, go for the most!'"

LORRAINE was a lovely film about a hotel on its last legs in the Catskill Mountains. The owner, Maureen Stapleton, does everything she can to salvage the place. I played one of the hotel's waitresses. What was beautiful about *SWEET LORRAINE* is that it was a small, independent film, and there was a very comfortable atmosphere there—not a great deal of pressure. The director, Steve Gomer, seemed to be having a rough go of it, but there wasn't a lot demanded from the cast. Most of the cast—including Giancarlo Esposito, Todd Graff and Edith Fazio—were my peers, so we got along well. It was a nice intro into filmland."

Adapting to film, Tunie shifted from her theatrical flair into a natural style that could tolerate the scrutiny of a close-up. "I found that I had to learn film acting by rote. When you're doing a play, you have the momentum of the piece. You start the play at eight o'clock, then you are

completely in that world for the next two to three hours. In film, it's all fragmented, you're being filmed out of sequence. Also, the world is much smaller because the world is defined by the camera. As a result, your acting needs to be a great deal smaller for the camera than on the stage because, in theater, you're playing so that the last row in the balcony can see and get the play's emotional life. In front of the camera, it's all much more subtle. Many times people look back on their first film, and they say, 'Oh my God, I can't believe how horrible I was,' but my work in *SWEET LORRAINE* was passable.

"*WALL STREET* came soon afterward. I had a nice, little supporting role in that. Charlie Sheen played Bud Fox, a man who worked at a brokerage firm. I was the receptionist and so every time Bud would come into the office, or leave, we would have this little flirtation. It was very cute. Toward the end of the story, Bud was arrested for some shady dealings and I became sort of his Greek chorus, echoing the pain and guilt that he was going through.

"My next big role was in *CITY HALL* with Al Pacino. I adore this man. He is the best. He comes on the set and you don't feel like, 'Oh, the movie star's here.' He is what is known as a 'total actor.' He really focuses on his work and likes to do a number of takes, and try different things, and he's open and responsive to what the other actors are doing. You get the feeling that he really likes working with other actors.

"When I first came onto the set, I had this 'Michael Corleone' thing about Al. I was a huge *GODFATHER* fan and, to me, Al Pacino was always Michael Corleone. But in *CITY HALL*, he was playing the mayor of New York City, John Pappas, and so I had to lock out all these *GODFATHER* images. I played a character named Leslie Christus, and she was

Pappas' press secretary. The film opens with a shooting in uptown Manhattan. A small boy is caught in the crossfire and is killed. As soon as Pappas comes to City Hall after hearing about the shooting, Leslie meets him and the two of them go over how they're going to deal with the situation.

"Leslie was a fairly substantial part, and I played it very straight and businesslike: glasses, tailored suits...very professional. It was after the film wrapped that all my blocked images came undone, and I had a small nervous breakdown/freak-out thing: 'Oh my God, I just worked with Al Pacino!' It was great, really great."

Thorne reunited with Pacino for *THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE*, a Mephistophelean tale. "I had only one scene with Al in that one, at a party. Al played a lawyer named John Milton, who was actually the Devil. My role was Jackie Heath, one of Milton's demonic minions. It was not a huge part, but it was a very significant one. Until Jackie makes her appearance, there is absolutely no indication that *DEVIL'S ADVOCATE* is a nothing more than courtroom drama. Jackie introduces herself to her new neighbor, Mary Ann Lemax [Charlize Theron, page 24] and—on the surface—everything appears normal and friendly. When an acquaintance of mine saw the film, she said, 'When you first came on the screen, I felt uncomfortable. I felt that there was something sinister at work in Jackie.' That was absolutely what I wanted to convey. My whole inner monologue in that scene was, 'I have a secret.'"

"I looked on the character of Jackie as somebody who enjoys life, has all this money, has everything at her fingertips. She lives in New York City, and she can do whatever she wants whenever she wants. Her husband Leonon [Ruben Santiago-Hudson] works all the time, so she really doesn't have to see too much of him. She is basically free. However, her bargain was to be a disciple of Satan. It wasn't something that she lived 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It was something that, when her services were



Thorne: "I'm an actor, I love what I'm doing & I make a comfortable living at this profession that I've chosen. I always enjoy myself, no matter what I'm doing."

called upon by his Evil Royaltiness, she would do what was necessary. For the most part, though, she was just this high society lady with very definite opinions. It was only at certain moments that the evil reared its ugly head—literally.

"There was a very crucial scene in a department store dressing room. Jackie strips down to her panties, openly parading her surgically enhanced breasts in front of Mary Ann. Jackie guards the embarrassed woman into touching her breasts. Mary Ann recalls, and then Jackie morphs into this hideous thing. The sight of it causes poor Mary Ann to flee the dressing room in terror and, later on, to doubt her own sanity.

"That very key scene was one that I didn't even get to see until I went to the premiere. It was originally shot on regular film, and then on this special effects film with a special camera. I basically looked and did the same thing—take after take after take. All the supernatural stuff was done in post-production. When Gregory and I

went to the premiere of the film, we're watching the screen like everybody else and we knew what was coming... but not what it was going to look like. Then, when the demon flashes over my face, I was just as terrified and appalled as everybody else. I mean, I screamed. I was like, 'Whoa, what was that?' So it was fun to see it with all these people and respond the same way.

"It was a great scene. It was frightening, it was sexy and it was freaky and it was so sensual. I had done one nude scene before *DEVIL'S ADVOCATE*, and that was in an independent film called *RESCUING DESIRE*. This film was about a woman who was in mid-life, she had been married, she had a son and everything, but—in reality—she was gay. The movie was about her coming out. I didn't play that character but I did play her co-worker and, ultimately, her lover, so we had a nude love scene. It was a very nice love scene, very tasteful, very tasteful.

"The lovemaking in *RESCUING DESIRE* was more difficult for me than the nudity in *DEVIL'S ADVOCATE* because the *RESCU-*

ING scene was totally sexual, totally naked. In *DEVIL'S ADVOCATE*, I was merely topless, within a dressing room and in the context of, 'Okay, yesh, this is what we do.' Even when Jackie had Mary Ann's hands on her breasts, there was a little hint of maybe something sexual, but it was more like Jackie wasn't trying to seduce her, just unnerve her. Also, we were filming on a closed set and Taylor [Hickford, the director]—who can be very volatile at times—was extremely sensitive and aware that, because of *RESCUING DESIRE*, I was a little uneasy.

"After *DEVIL'S ADVOCATE* was in the can, I did the narration for *EVE'S BAYOU*. How I got to do that is an interesting story. Kasi Lemmons, the writer/director of that film, is a very good friend of mine. When she first wrote the script of *EVE'S BAYOU*, she sent me a copy. It was Kasi's first full script. She had done some scenes before that, some one-act things, but this was her first completed screenplay and it was absolutely perfect.



It: "Al Pacino and me in CITY HALL. I just adore this man, he's the best. I played my part, as his press secretary, strategist & businesslike: glasses, tailored suits. We worked together again in DEVIL'S ADVOCATE."

Imagine, a first draft and it was just perfect.

"She had written the role of the mother of little Eve—the role that Lynn Whitfield wound up playing—with me in mind. Kasi told me, 'I want you to do this...!' and so forth, but a lot of time passed, like maybe six or seven years, and nothing happened. Then, quite suddenly, Kasi got the green light. I read for the film, but, because it was Kasi's directorial debut, she didn't have enough clout at

that point to say, 'Okay, Tamara is the one it's going to be.' I read with Sam [F. Jackson] and it went really well, but the studio was very much into having Lynn do my part. So they went back and forth, back and forth, and—ultimately, of course—Lynn did the part. And she did it wonderfully. She is a wonderful actress.

"When the film went into post-production, I was in L. A. finishing up some DEVIL'S ADVOCATE stuff. Kasi was editing her film, and so I

TAMARA TUNIE

"My DEVIL'S ADVOCATE scene was so frightening. It was freaky, sexy—and it was so sensual."

met her just to see what was going on. She and her editor, Terilyn Shropshire, were working on the very beginning of the film. Kasi's voice had been doing the narration, but she wasn't happy with the way things were going. She complained that she couldn't wait until she got her voice off the film. So I said to her, 'Who's going to do the voice over, who's going to be the adult Eve?' She said, 'I don't know. I've put a call in to so-and-so, and I haven't heard back from her.' I said, 'I'll do it. I'll do it tomorrow and I'll do it for free.' The next day, we went into the ADR room and laid down the track. I was so impassioned about this movie, not only because it was a film with all black actors, but also because it was a story that had never been seen or told. It was the first film about African-Americans that didn't involve drugs or guns, and the people weren't living in an urban ghetto. They were an upper-middle-



class family. The father was a professional, a doctor. It was just a whole other perspective, a slice of black life that few people were aware of.

"EVE'S BAYOU was a family drama about black people, but you could take the same story and put any actors in it—white, Chinese, whatever—and it would still be a very compelling and powerful story. The fact that the characters were black was not necessarily the premise of the film.

"I loved that film from the first time I read it, and I wanted to—needed to—do something in it. When Kasi first told me about the movie, and that they were going to be filming down in Louisiana, I told her, 'I will come and pull cables, deliver donuts. I will do whatever you want me to do in this film.' Naturally, when I did the voice over, I was stoked. And I was more nervous than I have ever been in my life. I felt more pressure doing the voice over on this film than almost any performance I've done, because it was so important to me.

"I completed the first take, and I actually got goosebumps...and so did everyone else. We did a few more takes for safety, but the voice of Eve was in my head that it was like I was channeling. It just came effortlessly and I remember, when they played it back, Kasi was sitting on the sofa in the recording room and I dropped to my knees as we listened to this. Kasi took my hand and we were almost crying, because it was so right-on! I talk about it now and I still get choked up. My work on that film is one of the proudest moments I have. It really is.

"For the most part, I've been excited about the film work that I have done. There was one exception, though. Tim Reid's (SISTER, SISTER) production company put together something called SPIRIT LOST. It was a supernatural story about a man and wife who move into this house in Virginia, and the house is haunted by the spirit of a woman. After a period of time, the ghost seduces the husband. I was neither the ghost nor the wife in that film. My part was very small. I was the wife's best friend, and I tried to offer advice and be her sounding-board, etcetera. It was not the best film. On paper, the concept looked really interesting. But I had a hunch from the outset that it just wouldn't gel properly. So I flew down South, shot my stuff and got out of there as fast as I could.

"My latest film, which was Brian De Palma's SNAKE EYES, is a far more interesting experience. The film takes place in Atlantic City on the event of a huge prizefight and my



"I've never actually been involved in a sitcom. My type of humor is what I call 'verbal' humor, intelligent humor. The comedy shows just don't appeal to me."

character, Anthea Robinson, is a pay-per-view newscaster who is covering the fight. I spend most of the film on the Atlantic City boardwalk in a hurricane. I had four fire hoses, two rain towers and four fans—the sort of jet engines—all pointed at me.

"I have a little De Palma anecdote to tell about that shoot. When we were setting up for the establishing shot, which is when the hurricane is in full swing, we first did a rehearsal. This was without the effects, so I'm standing in front of the camera and I'm reading. After we cut, Brian looks at me and says, 'That was great. Now let's see how you do it when we turn on all the effects,' and I was like, 'Oh yeah, right.' So we did a few takes with all the effects, and I'm sopping wet—and I mean sopping wet—and, after one take, I come over to look at the monitor with him. We look at the take and Brian turns to me and says, 'The next time somebody offers you a film, and you're in a hurricane, say No!' I said to him, 'Oh, now you tell me!'

"When I got back to New York, a good friend of mine asked me how I was able to survive all that, what with being blown around and being drenched with all that water. I told her that my survival technique was actually the most pleasant part of the whole shoot. The cast was already staying in one of the big casino hotels in Atlantic City and, before I arrived, I told the production coordinator I wanted a room that wasn't near the elevator bank. We were going to be shooting nights, and I didn't want to be disturbed by the whirling of the machinery. She said, 'Okay, fine.' I arrived and started to check into my room at the desk, and I asked the clerk if my room was near the elevator bank. He said that it was. I said, 'Well, you know that we're going to be shooting nights, so I really would like to change my room.' The hotel was booked up, but the clerk said a lot of people were checking out the next day. He would put a special note up, and the next morning I should be able to move. I eventually ended up in a room that was on the 46th floor with huge windows and a gorgeous

view of the Atlantic Ocean. It also had a fairly large bathroom that had a Jacuzzi bathtub. We shot all night and, just before dawn, we would wrap so I would go back to my hotel. I would run a bubble bath, open a bottle of red wine, get into the Jacuzzi and watch the sun rise. That's how I survived shooting that film because I did that every morning when I got back, and it kept me sane. When I showed up bright and chipper for the shoot in the evenings, all the crew—everybody—was saying, 'Oh, you're such a trooper! I never told anybody what I was doing. It was my little secret, my little gift to myself.'

"In between all these films I did a lot of episodic and airtel TV. I had recurring roles on NYPD BLUE, FEDS, and was a regular on AS THE WORLD TURNS. I did guest spots on CHICAGO HOPE, SEASIDE SVS and NEW YORK UNDERCOVER.

"It's probably obvious that all my work, both in film and TV, has been in drama. I have done comic bits in serious pieces, but I've never actually

TAMARA TUNIE

"I love EVE'S BAY-OU. It's the first film about Afro-Americans not involving drugs or guns."

been involved in a sitcom or a comedy movie. There is a reason for that. My agent, Sarah Farge, will probably tell you that I am very particular about the roles I play. My type of humor is what I call 'smart' humor, intelligent humor. The schtick shows just don't appeal to me. Another thing is that I have auditioned for a couple of sitcoms, and I was so very bad that I told myself, 'This is embarrassing. I can't let people see me do this.'

'I got into this business because I love acting, and I love doing stuff with some integrity. Coincidentally, I'm in negotiations right now with director Emily Behr, who's doing an independent film they're calling THE GUY'S GUIDE TO MARRY RICH. It's HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE, but in reverse and in 1999. It's smart humor so I can do that.'

'If I sound like I'm on my high horse all the time, I really don't mean to. I had a sister who died when she was 37, and that was a real reminder to me that life is short. So my approach to my work, and my life, is 'Go for the best, go for the most.'

'I'm an actor, I love what I'm doing and I make a comfortable living at this profession I've chosen. I always enjoy myself, no matter what I am doing. When I made a commitment to do SNAKE EYES, I was the one who said 'Yes.' So, I'm not going to let myself be in a shitty mood the whole time I'm shooting, and make everybody else really miserable and unhappy. That's my approach to most things: life is short, let's have a good time. We're all here to accomplish this one task, so let's have a good time doing it. Let's party!"



1. Peeking for Polona. **2.** As a DEVIL'S ADVOCATE, Tunie strips away her business facade. "It's a key scene in a dressing room, I morph into this hideous thing. The supernatural stuff was done in post-production."







"C.C. Costigan has a perfection of proportion that evokes a surreal quality," says photographer Jan Dean. "Her presence is perfectly com-quitting for sci-fi. I think just about everyone would like to touch her body."

Hot Springs Vamp *C.C. Costigan*

DRIFTING AWAY FROM SEXY SITCOMS, A FORMER BIKINI MODEL IS SADDLED WITH A SCI-FI SERIES AND MOVIE.

By JACQUELINE LOVELL



A quarter to 1 p.m. I pull into the Coffee Bean lot on Sunset, and prepare for my first *FP* assignment—an intro piece on C.C. Costigan, who just wrapped a few TV pilots and had been cast in a sci-fi film scheduled to shoot, next week, in Europe. Unfortunately, neither of us knew what the other looked like, so we ended up sitting opposite each other for 15 minutes! When it dawned on me that Costigan was the neighboring customer, I suggested we go outside where the whirl of espresso makers wouldn't interrupt the interview...

The acting rush hit Costigan when she debuted in her first play, *March, You're So Fickle* at age six. "We made our own costumes out of cardboard—I was a pussy willow," laughs Costigan. "I loved it! I knew this would be my goal."

The Hawaiian native plunged into commercials and bikini modeling at 15. She was equally active in drama, sweeping regional "Best Actress" awards—for three consecutive years—in one-act play competitions. But a career as an aspiring actor seemed unlikely for Costigan. Raised in a mili-

L: Costigan poses as a vamp for Jan Gees. Glenn Felder styled the look. **R:** Hanging-out with Deanna Harryman at *Blowback*'s 1935 SEPTEMBER 2008.



"I'm cast in *SHADOW WARRIOR* as a space martial who brings an evil woman to justice. Weird stuff: aliens breed with humans. I'm the femme fatale of the final frontier."

tary family, she planned to enter medical school...

However, during the advent of graduation, Costigan announced to her bewildered family that she had enlisted in the Army. "My dad was like, 'You won't last a week!'" She proved him wrong. The youngest in her platoon, Costigan was put in charge of the unit. "When I went into the military it was so easy for me," shrugs Costigan. "I was the biggest tomboy." Disciplined with three older brothers, she faced her fears and learned how to think fast on her feet. Costigan was promoted from basic training to a station in Ft. Burley, Alaska where she learned and perfected medical research.

A year and a half had elapsed when Costigan finally admitted she was sick of being in the middle of nowhere. Bidding adieu to Dallas and worked in public relations for Planet Hollywood. But Costigan's tenure was interrupted by her father's abrupt illness. She dropped everything and returned home to Henderson, Nevada.

Within nine months, Costigan renewed her acting vocation. She landed minor roles in *AUSTIN POWERS* and *VEGAS VACATION*, but her sweeter gig was performing as Tina Turner's stand-in and stunt double in *TOP OF THE WORLD*. When the production team headed back to L.A. for pick-up shots, Costigan packed her bags and moved with them. While conferring with an acting coach, Costigan made extra revenue by modeling bikinis and lingerie. "Photographers love



Sophisticated (senior) costumed HOT SPRINGS HOTEL: Costigan (C) checked-in as the series' eye candy ("I shot my first love scene!"). R: Peeling with other weekly regulars Arden Anders (T&E) and Sabrina Allen (EMERGENCY OF THE VAMPIRE).

me because I'm so versatile," she explains. "I can go anywhere with them because I'm Hawaiian, Indian, Italian, Irish, German, French, Portuguese, Japanese, Cantonese and Spanish!"

With the help of ICM, she booked a regular role on *HOT SPRINGS HOTEL*, a burlesque revue camouflaged as a Showtime sitcom. Though obligated to show more warts than ass-on-fire, Costigan recounts the series as "a quirky, eventful experience! I shot my first love scene!" She freelanced the Witness episode of *MADAME WINSTON'S SECRETS*, an erotic series, because "up until now it was the best thing I had done and that's because I had authority over my character. Playing an FBI agent, I was tough and mean."

Though passionate about theatre, Costigan realizes "the stage" affords actors more experience than money. She vows to eventually "invest" her celebrity—



whether it's tagged to stage or screen—into the Foundation of Breast Cancer. Her current manager, Michael London, pitched her for the *NETHERWORLD* television pilot ("It's an action thing for kids. I play the Evil Goddess who tries to take over the world"). There's a likelihood that Costigan may also play a recurrent character in *GET REAL* if that pilot is

expanded into a series. "I'll find out when I return from Prague," she says. "I'm going there in a few days to shoot a sci-fi film called *SHADOW WARRIOR*. I'm cast as Nikki, a space martial who reforms her negative image by bringing an evil woman to justice. There's aliens breeding with humans and...Did I mention that my character is a femme fatale?" □



MAMIE VAN DOREN ON THE WEB

ONCE BANNED FROM TV ("TOO SEXY!"), THIS DRIVE-IN DIVA IS SIZZLING IN CYBERSPACE!

By DAN SCAPPEROTT

The 1950s spawned a litany of sexpots, but only a few have been indelibly linked to that decade. Groomed by the top brass as a movie star, Marilyn Monroe's celebrity rendered inaccessible to adolescents; furthermore, her films were gauged too turgid for drive-in commerce. Jayne Mansfield, a Marilyn Monroe wannabe, deflected exploration of her rival's psyche and instead caricatured the "breathy bimbo" facade. Teens, and eventually adults, regarded Mansfield as a cartoon. The careers and personal lives of both icons eroded into tragedy. Then there was that other voluptuous blonde, Mamie Van Doren. Squeezing her voluptuous anatomy into tight sweaters, she embodied the subversive rock 'n' roll counterculture. The personification of "bad girl," her rebellious pansache and B(som)-movies horrified parents. Teens loved her.

Raised as Joan Olander, her teenage pulchritude and personality were showcased from Broadway musicals to the footlights of Las Vegas. Howard Hughes, RKO Pictures' boncho, hired the starlet for JET SET, a John Wayne debacle

that crash-landed after years of post-production. But it wasn't until she signed a contract with Universal International that Ms. Olander was christened Mamie Van Doren. The studio's p.r. machine worked overtime, interminably dropping Van Doren into the print medium and luring her with a surfeit of leading men, including Rock Hudson. Served up as eye candy, she drew attention in a stale swashbuckler called YANKEE PASHA (1954). Cast as a barefoot girl, she debated her trademark "bullet bra." After a



"At the peak of my drive-in sovereignty, I wonder how many concepts, in back seats of cars, were ignited by my film?"
SEAT GENERATION, one of 8 films I made for producer Albert "Gaggy" Zugoroff.

"I'm a woman of the future. I consider myself the first, authentic sex symbol in cyberspace. Its the new millennium, honey. Wake up!"

string of inconsequential films—FRANCIS JOINS THE WACS, AIN'T MISBEHAVIN', etc.—Van Doren married in 1955 and was pregnant within one year. The studio terminated Van Doren's contract because their "busty bombshell hits" conflicted with her maternity. "And I was banned from TV!" she exclaims. "A man could wiggle on TV—remember Elvis!—but not women. Certainly not me."

Van Doren circumvented the mainstream industry and reinvented herself as a drive-in diva. Her legacy includes SEX KITTENS GO TO COLLEGE, THE PRIVATE LIVES OF ADAM AND EVE ("Censors! My leading man could show his navel, but a firm had to cover mine"), COLLEGE CONFIDENTIAL, et al.

As her popularity waned in the mid-'60s, Van Doren concurred to shoot some topless scenes for a low-budget burlesque comedy, THREE NUTS IN SEARCH OF A BOLT (1964). The ingenuus boosted the film's boxoffice by posing for a 10-page pictorial in *Playboy* magazine. But the subsequent notoriety offered Van Doren only enough latitude to pick roles in films that lapsed to the bottom of double-bills, what with THE LAS VEGAS HILLBILLIES, THE NAVY VS. THE NIGHT MONSTERS and VOYAGE TO THE PLANET OF PREHISTORIC WOMEN.

Today, Van Doren—as flirtatious as ever—is determined that modern technology will be heir to her



"Me in *TEACHER'S PET* (56), my first substantive role as an A-venue. Clark Gable, the film's star, spotted me in a commissary when I was doing *BORN RECKLESS*. My voluptuous scene had to be subtle & smooth."

legend. Not long after Labor Day '88, she sustained communication with admirers—and developed her own archive—by weaving a website: www.mamiesandoren.com.

"I first saw it on television, where some porn stars were talking about their websites," smiles Van Doren. "I thought, 'Gee, this is interesting but it's not really me.' I surf the Net and I play games. I had not seen anything that was Hollywood glamour. I mean, there were some pinups but nothing substantive. I thought it would be interesting to do something, and be able to get across me rather than someone else's version of me. I've had journalists do interviews with me, and I've been on television, but I really have never been able to talk about things the way I wanted to talk about them. So now I can get on the site and get something that represents the way I really am: I wanted to do Hollywood glamour."

Van Doren recounts the early '60s as a generation fueled on innocence; "I wanted to talk about those days and my experience. That's why I came up with this idea to use the Internet. I told the guy who did the logo that I wanted it Hollywood style, with my name emblazoned in sort of an Art Deco style—that's my favorite era. We put it up ourselves and got the software to put in the sky with the little stars, and added different colors to it. It's just such an art to keep it up."

"I consider myself a woman of the future. I have never been one to stay in the same era as everyone else, or live in the past in an era that I was hot in. I try to be ahead of everything and, since I've almost reached the millennium time, I feel like I've been there a lot longer than

"A New Year's party from the past! Had my best New Year's eve in 1995, partying with Hugh Hefner. We celebrated the birth of my website. Young guys knelt on nude pictures of me."



"My [low budget] 'teenage' films—like *GIRLS TOWN*—have drawn cult idolatry. They're more popular than the bland films I did at Universal and Fox."

everyone else.

"I don't want just to be considered a sexpot. I want people to realize that there's something behind this body and this hair, and this face and these breasts. I want people to know that there is a brain. When you think of women who didn't survive after age 36—like some of my contemporaries—it's very painful and very sad. I'm a survivor; I always thought that I had a pretty good sense of the world around me, and was able to jump those hurdles whenever they came. I was always able to reach out and do it. I'm out in cyberspace and I'm going to stay there."

"During the innocent '50s and '60s—when one's virtuous values were divided between a woman's cleavage and the Hays Department's censorship—I was really a woman ahead of my time. I was a maverick, I was a rebel. I didn't fuck the people I was supposed to. I did it pretty much when I wanted to do it, and sometimes it held me back. I think it held me back considerably in my career. My personal life really took hold. People would tell me I couldn't do this, or I can't do that. I did what I wanted. I did it and it felt good—and when something felt good, and I liked it, I did it. Why not? I wasn't hurting anyone. I'm talking about sex, now. The casting couch was pretty much there but I never did unless I wanted to. I'm not a cunning woman. I never have been. I've never been the type that would scheme or do things like

"This dress was purchased for me by Howard Hughes, circa '58. Hughes discovered me as Miss Palm Springs. He wanted photos of me in a white sweater and no hat. I debuted in his *JET PILOT*."



"Pretty risqué for the '60s. Back then, Brigitte Bardot was packing thongies in **AND GOD CREATED WOMAN** (1956). She showed her bare butt and boobs. I had wished that I'd been born in Europe."



"The '50s & '60s were 'virtuous.' Back then, I was a woman ahead of my time. I was a rebel, a maverick. I didn't fuck the people I was supposed to."

that. Women have had to do that in the past but I never was that way."

You're greeted at Van Doren's homepage by a large magenta palm tree and rooms that require only a "click" for entrance. "There's the *Mamae Dishes*, where you find all the gossip," says Van Doren, guiding me through the site. "In *Bedtime Stories*, I talk generally about one person I've known. In my first bedtime story, I talk about Henry Kissinger. It goes into detail about my first date and the Golden Globes, how I ran into Marilyn Monroe and having to sit with Joan Crawford." Her union with the veteran icon proved memorable—for all the wrong reasons. "I was just a kid, really," recalls Van Doren. "I was named for Joan Crawford and this was my mother's favorite movie star. She was drunk and kept making nasty remarks to me. It was very hard for me because I, formerly Jean Olander, was given a new name: *Mamae Van Doren*. I was Universal Studio's answer to the hottest sex symbol in the business, Marilyn Monroe. That night, I had a date with the most eligible bachelor and leading man on the lot, Rock Hudson. There was a lot going for me. How many women can sheer all that in one day? It happened so quickly."

The site's installments also includes *Friends*, a can-

"My cleavage made me a candidate for the Hays Office. Studios promoted hot pictures of me, claiming they were about two years before I had been put under their contract."

did photo gallery of Van Doren and her compatriots—Terry Moore, Virginia O'Brien, etc.—partying. "I also have a Filmography spot," says the actress. "I've done over 40 movies all over the world, as well as acted on the theatrical stage. So they can really get to know me. A lot of my fans are in their twenties and teens. Some are my age, some aren't. My movies are kind of cult movies. I did the teenage movies—RUNNING WILD and UNTAMED YOUTH, GIRLS TOWN, BEAT GENERATION...They've become very popular today, much more than the bland movies that were done at Fox and even Universal. I did some big Cinemascope movies at Universal, but they aren't unique or offbeat." Cardinal Spellman, in fact, didn't approve Van Doren's shower scene in the aforementioned GIRLS TOWN: "And nothing showed! But they had to cut it out!"

Van Doren's website will eventually be expanded to include an homage "to the most beautiful women in the world. I'd like to pay homage to Jean Harlow and Mae West, and some of the blondes who blazed the path for all of us, including Madonna. Also, instead of 'Dear Abby,' I'd like to have a 'Dear Mamie' section where men can write to me with their problems. You're the producer of your own life, and it's out there in cyberspace. It's not just the United States. It's seen all over the world. I get things from New Zealand, from Australia, from Paris, from every place. It's just incredible.

"I want to consider myself the first authentic sex kitten in cyberspace. If Mae West was here today...She wrote her own lines and did her own scripts, she would be sitting in front of a damn computer and she'd be in cyberspace. I feel she was one of the survivors and she lasted and she enjoyed herself."

Not that Van Doren is a



"I was preparing to do SEX KITTENS GO TO COLLEGE (PG). Like the Bachel was supposed to do the film with me, but she wanted too much money. I loved carrier John Curvature. He said, 'You're only old once...do whatever you want to.'"



stranger to modern technology. Back in 1967, she typed *Playing the Field*—her memoirs—"on a computer that was a tiny, little thing. Six inches wide. You had to 'have' every time you wrote something, and you had to use the typewriter to number the pages. I had to spread the typed pages on an ironing board to keep track of the numbers. I can't believe how far we've come in just ten years. I can't imagine what the next ten years will be like. It's the new millennium, honey, and people better wake up.

"My book opened people's eyes. I talked about shapes and sizes, which was a no-no back then. Nobody had ever done it. There were books that followed after I did it. I was a pioneer. I'm going to do the same with this medium.

"When Liz Smith plugged my website in her daily column, my numbers skyrocketed. I think there were 11,000 people who logged-on in one day. My website is designed to show how many hits you have on your photographs, and the length of time each visitor remains on one photograph. You can see that they stay on my nudes for like 15 minutes, and it's so fun because you know what they're doing." Sales for Van Doren's glossies—autographed, nude poses which range from \$20 to \$300 a pop—have been brisk.

She offers an abridged history of campings in the website's photo gallery. "The Platinum Bombshell picture was shot at MGM. It was taken when I was doing *TEACHER'S PET* with Clark Gable. Edith Head, who did the costumes for those pictures, called me the Diamond Blonde. She felt instead of the Platinum Blonde, I should be called the Diamond Blonde. She had me dressed in white and rhinestones, and my hair was white."

"We were HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL. I had just returned from the Venice Film Festival where I was supposed to pose with Brigitte Bardot, but my illness prohibited it."

And how about the photo identified as *Cyber Sex Kitten*? "Oh...the one with the nipples. That's the one that visitors to my site hang on to the longest: 24 minutes. That picture was photographed by Tom Kelly around 1967. He is the same photographer who took the picture of Marilyn Monroe for her calendar. Tom wanted to do a shoot of me and I said, 'Okay!' He took them for a magazine called *Connaisseur*. At that time, it was understood that I could have the photographs after they appeared in the magazine. I did it mainly because I wanted to have some pictures taken of me by the famous Tom Kelly."

When I query Van Doren about the genesis of *Kookie Amateur*, another of her website's installations, she flashes a toothy grin. "One night, I was half tipsy drunk and this famous ballplayer—I won't mention his name—was in the room and he had a camera. I put this stupid black veil and how in my hair, and acted kind of kinky. There was probably a big sex scene around that photograph. It was a wild time. Guys like *Kookie Amateur*, which is really funny. I have all these pictures that were taken by professionals and, all of a sudden, everybody wants some picture that some ballplayer took. This is the first time I've ever told anybody who took it."

Van Doren's admirers were particularly impressed with a photo of the sex symbol published in *FF* 5.8 (reprinted on page 47). Titled *Christmas Morning, What Packaging!*, she's completely "unwrapped," exempting a red ribbon that conceals her private parts. "That was taken Christmas morning in the late '60s," she recounts. "A guy came over and decided to take some pictures of me. I don't

"I'm photographed by the guy who shot Jean Harlow. He loved platinum blondes. I was this tiny girl with large breasts: the studio insisted on feathering my cleavage for p.o. pic."





"It was my book that opened people's eyes. I discussed shapes & sizes, a no-no back then. I was a pioneer. And I'll do the same with cyberspace."

remember who took them. I don't even think it was a professional. Just a friend of mine who has since died.

"Another one on my website, *Sitting Pretty*, features me in a dress that was loaned to me by MGM. It was made by Andrew Park, who made all of Mae West's and Jean Harlow's evening gowns."

Prime Nude, one of Van Doren's earliest "still life" disrobements, is "yet again, another offbeat depiction. Some kookie amateur took that with my arms up in the air and I was fooling around. People also look at that one for 15-20 minutes. Another popular one, *Noughty*—where I'm reclining on a couch and I'm completely naked—has prompted visitors to stay for over a quarter of an hour. It was taken in my home, up on Sunset Plaza Drive in Hollywood, around 1967. When I get in the mood to take a picture, and there's a camera and someone around, I encourage them to photograph me. I still like to walk around nude in my house."

The website, in fact, has turned into a profitable franchise for the bombshell. "I'm going to design more things for sale like T-shirts," she says. "And maybe a ball cap with a picture. I was the originator of the bullet bra. I named it. Madonna calls it the rocket bra. The main focus of my website is to let people know who Mamie Van Doren really is. Let 'em peek through a keyhole and cue-in on all of my secrets." □

I'm posing at the MGM studio behind my crossover to the drive-in trade. My mom and I, together, screened my films at the drive-ins. I'd eat popcorn and see all of middle America."



Posing on Christmas Morning. At press time, Van Doren conceived to "participate in a film adaptation of my life." Which actress would Van Doren prefer to be cast as herself? "Angelina Jolie! She is so cutting edge!"

CARMILLA

LAST GASP OF GUERRILLA FILMMAKING: A NO-BUDGET TALE OF THE SAPPHIC VAMPIRE.



the movie's underhanded conclusion, it was never a bad idea to have a woman in the lead. "In the beginning, I was like, 'I'm not jumping into a movie unless I know I can do it,'" says Karin. "I was like, 'I'm not going to do it unless I know I can do it.'"

Sumnerfield, who has turned Karin's story into a hit movie, says he's adapted it

from the book by Karin Sumnerfield



"In spite of CAR-
NELL's behind-the-
scenes turbulence,
Karin Sumnerfield was
100% professional,"
says Karin Sumner-
field, who declined a
director's credit. "By
the way, her shower
scene has nothing to
do with the film." In
"As an abused wife,
she finds strength in
her vampirism."



Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, a novella that already spawned a string of movies *Extras*, furnished by a local radio station, swarmed around Summerfield to negotiate their 15 minutes. I noticed an attractive blonde whose dress yawned ample cleavage. Her name was Lisann DuVaul, and CARMILLA was her second credit in a vampire film. "This one looked like a classier production," claimed DuVaul, who identified her genre debut as something called *VAMPIRE CALL GIRLS*. She adjusted her bust and moved on.

I grabbed a seat on a nearby stool to get a good view of the scene in progress. But what I observed was not quite what I expected from a B-pic in East Booboo. Summerfield, alongside DP Jeff Dunn, choreographed a dramatic entrance for "the woman in black" (aka Carmilla), evoking a 1930's musical pansche. Bar patrons danced with one another and systematically separated as the camera dolled between them. The crowd parted until the lone, central image of Carmilla was absorbed into the lens. The film's title character was played by Boobois Karna (yes, Boobois). She was clad in a black bra/long ensemble replete with fishnet drapes. On looks alone, I couldn't link this woman to the tempestuous Carmilla. Karna had a sweet, classically beautiful face that didn't quite match the outfit. "I'm always cast as the girl-next-door based on my outside appearance," explained the starlet. "I look innocent, but inside there's a certain depth and mystery to me."

"Action!" Carmilla introduces herself to Monique (Marina Morgan), a victim of spousal abuse who draws a long puff from a filter-tipped cigarette. There was enough Goth, smoke and machine-spewed fog in the

"Though Boobois Karna [?] played the 90s role in CARMILLA, her role was tailored to a cameo," notes Summerfield. "As a result of the on-set environment, there wasn't enough to support the character in its entirety."

MARINA MORGAN, ACTRESS

"Some people don't have an open mind, that's what it boils down to. People freak out about stuff...like the two chicks on the set who can't believe I've kissed girls before. No big deal."



Kevin Summerfield (left), c. w. director photography Jeff Dunham describes Lillian DuVal (c.) as "an incredibly seductive and 'Bitchy' model who had a very minor role in the film's nightclub scene. She should've had more screen time."

me on. Duane and I were in the hotel elevator, and I have this claustrophobia because I got stuck in one when I was younger. Suddenly, this elevator didn't move...We were stopped for quite a while. I kept pressing all the buttons to get the damn thing to start. Then this chick came up behind us and tapped in a code and it just fuckin' moved! It was scary. It was like she stopped it on purpose, you know to have a lesbian experience, maybe."

"Did you have a lesbian



bar to visually render the whole thing into a disco-Hammer hybridization. As the dry ice dissipated, I noticed that Morgan's face had been cosmetically bruised into raw hamburger. Summerfield ditched suggestions to light the battered woman with a soft focus for a pollyanna-like quality. He opted for unflattering reality. As Dunn was adjusting gels, Karns briefed me on her character: "Carmilla basically takes over Monique. She feeds on the battered woman, and she's so aggressive and sensual. Carmilla is ultimate power. I enjoy playing her because she is truly strong. I also play the role of Miracilla who is Carmilla before she becomes a vampire. It's a challenge."

It was time for the next scene. As camera rolled, Morgan and Karns recited their lines. Both were seated in a booth; dancers revealed behind a glass partition. DuVal was recruited by Summerfield to stand adjacent to the glass and ad-lib silent dialogue. The five-foot ingenue stood on a soap box so she—cleavage and all—would be very visible in the shot.

Between rehearsals, Marina Morgan and FF photographer Duane Polcun invited me to McDonald's for some grub. "I love playing psychotic roles," said Morgan as she slid into her seat. "I'm so attracted to the extreme. When you see a lot, you can act out a lot—and believe me, I've seen it all and done it all! I'm amazed that several cast members are surprised by things I'm into."

Like what?

"I think it's odd that people have never met vampire-types. I walked around downtown Baltimore with dark makeup and my fangs in and people totally freaked out. They thought I was kind of strange, but they also asked for my autograph like I was some big celeb!"

Le Fanu's Carmilla, the distaff Dracula, wasn't afforded exploration until con-

siders would buy into a vampire who sustained an alternate lifestyle. Carl Dreyer's VAMPIRE (1932)—which circumvented any allusion to lesbianism—very loosely adapted Carmilla, as well as vignettes from Le Fanu's *In a Glass Darkly* compendium. A censored version of Roger's Vadim's BLOOD AND ROSES (1960) was launched in the States with a "Girl or Ghoul" competition. This time around, Carmilla (Annette Vadim) yielded to her sapphic impulses. A decade later, Carmilla (sensuously performed by Ingrid Pitt) satiated her girl/girl preclivities with even less restraint in THE VAMPIRE LOVERS, a Hammer film merging Grand Guignol and softcore sex that spawned a couple of R-rated sequels. Exemplifying 1983's THE HUNGER (Catherine Deneuve played a surrogate Carmilla), Hollywood shells out big bucks only for vampire sagas that predicate an adherence to machismo (e.g. JOHN CARPENTER'S VAMPIRES,

BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA, BLADE); women are written-off as sidekicks or sexual subordinates. But the vampire myth, and its inherent fetishism, is indelibly linked to low-budget horror flicks. All that's required are dime store fangs and non-artificial settings.

Miss Morgan reflected on her own rapport with Carmilla's sapphic lifestyle: "Some people just don't have an open mind. Like the two chicks on the set [referring to Karns and actress Sincia Crawford] who can't believe I've kissed girls before. I mean, no one here has kissed a girl! When I was eight years old, I used to practice with this other chick. No big deal." Studying Morgan's face, I noticed an expression of relief that I wasn't provoked into changing the subject.

Duane Polcun prompted Morgan to recount "the elevator story." Her face lit up: "Oh, the elevator! I just fall into these weird scenarios. I think I've always given out that aura because it turns

experience with her in the elevator?"

Glimmering at Polcun, Morgan popped a french fry in her mouth and sipped her Coke. "I think the woman wanted to have a threesome." When we left McDonald's, I still had no clue what she was talking about. But I was definitely entertained.

The next day's shooting schedule required a long drive to the country, so I cranked the a/c and headed out into the middle of nowhere. When I finally arrived at the location, much of the cast and crew were sprawled out on the spacious lawn outside of a quaint little house. Something that resembled lunch was being served (thank God I had animal crackers in the car). Hearing a voice booming across the yard, I lifted my head to see Summerfield talking into a bullhorn. Abruptly, somebody pressed pieces of cotton in my hand and advised me to "watch the eardrums." And then I heard the first gun-

shot. Brandishing a pistol, Summerfield declared, "Fair warning, you guys, this is a loud gun. It could do some hearing damage."

Turning around to find a comfy place to sit and observe, I ran into actor George Stover who was cast as Sheriff John Spieldorf. A B-movie veteran, Stover has worked with directors John Waters, Fred Olen Ray and Donald Farrant. "This role is definitely different for me," he explained. "I'm usually cast as the meek, mild-mannered guy or the henpecked husband—not the rough, tough cop type! I just recently played a pet store owner in my last project, so it's nice to stretch to do something a little more extreme. After *CARMILLA*, I just want to be in as many movies as possible, but, you know, sometimes we make plans and they don't happen. But, hey, I work cheap enough and I've had a knack for getting green."

Welcome to the world of guerrilla filmmaking. The west coast brass can afford the extravagance of a \$50-million production, which will commercially profit only if it grosses at least \$200 million to cover various expenses. But there exists a scaled-down, cottage industry that's near extinction. These movies are shot on natural locations for roughly the price of a Hollywood lunch. And unlike Hollywood commerce, which is governed by the obligatory quotas of sex and CGI effects, these regionally produced indie are afforded only a novice director's imagination.

"Kevin Summerfield is doing fine," volunteered Stover. "But he's burdened with a disadvantage in that he's cast several out-of-town people with such a short shooting schedule [nine days]. His past movies have largely been done with local crews and talent, but he's under a bit of pressure with *CARMILLA*. And he's handling it well, considering."

I asked Stover to identify his favorite femme fatale.

STACIA CRAWFORD, ACTRESS

"My role requires only a little nudity, but it was definitely a concern. I don't want to be one of those backyard, Camcorder queens. I'm here to make a good movie & keep my self-respect."



"Stacia Karmas, as Carmilla, drove a horde of zombies," recalls Summerfield. "It was shot at 7 A.M. in the city lanes of Sykesville, Maryland. The shoot was left."

Seemed innocent enough question to me. But, blushing vividly, he paused and stared at his feet. After much prodding he finally replied, "If I had fantasies about these women, it wouldn't be about working with them! Honestly, I'd say, Michelle Beaur would be my favorite. I was a fan of Michelle even before I worked with her [in *ATTACK OF THE 60 FOOT CENTERFOLD*]. She is down-to-earth and seemingly low stress!"

Strolling the grounds, I searched futilely for Tim Le Pine, *CARMILLA*'s producer. After the day's shoot had come to an end, I was invited to rendezvous with the cast at the Mt. Vernon Hotel in downtown Baltimore. I reached the corner of Franklin and Chamberlain to found lodgings that were lifted out of film noir. Upon entering the rustic building, it was as difficult to find the desk clerk—even after brutally pounding her bell—as it was to find a rest room. It wasn't long, however, before Duane Polcou greeted me.

He invited me to attend the "jazzai session?" Ranting the hotel facilities, he was photographing the film's three leading ladies in very steamy repose. But the shoot had been postponed for another two hours, and I was already melting from the 101-degree oven baking outside. I declined to stick around. I just wasn't in the mood for a bikini-laden tableau, you know?

On the following day, there was a surplus of "hurry up and wait." I arrived at "film locale #3" which turned out to be the producer's home. I climbed the porch steps, and entered the basement through the kitchen. As I descended the stairs, I heard a male voice screaming behind me, "Did you sign an 'extra' information sheet? Hey! You need to sign an information sheet!" Two zombies, making their exodus from a "makeup chamber," were startled by the screaming. Nodding at the disembodied voice, one of them told me, "I think he's talking to you." I boldly sang up the stairwell, "I'm

not an extra!" Five or six surprised pairs of eyes fixated on me at the bottom of the stairs. A few seconds later, another zombie approached me: "I think the producer's pissed at you!" The voice belonged to the producer! Ah, it seems I got off on the wrong foot with Mr. Le Pine. Oops.

But my attention drifted to actress Stacia Crawford. We slid into a makeshift dressing room to talk privately. "I play Laura, the sister of Monique," she explained. "Laura finds out she has a sister, who just passed away, whom she never knew about. So she goes to this small town—a ghost town—to find out about her late sister's history. She stays at her sister's house and finds a diary. That's where the whole story unfolds. I play the sweet, innocent virgin. When Kevin approached me with the script—he remembered me from when I auditioned for another of his films—I loved the character of Monique, but I knew she would have been a stretch for me. There is a lot of violence involved with her role and, out of the two roles, I felt that Laura was closer to me in physical appearance and everything. To tell you the truth, I struggled with [the nudity] back and forth, and back and forth..."

Crawford pushed her strawberry blonde hair aside and sighed deeply. She had a calm poise to her nature, and, like her character, had an unmistakable innocence about her that translated into "I'm not in comfortable territory, here." After a pregnant pause, she definitively noted, "My role requires only a little nudity, but it was definitely a concern. If Kevin wanted an actress to play the role—play it right and add an element of sexuality that was essential—then that was me. I spoke to Kevin on the phone for an hour and a half, and he was amazing. He is the reason why I did this project. He told me that everything was storyboarded and



Dangerous when wet: The vampire cool-off in a sapphic bond (l-r, Marina Morgan, Bootsie Karns and Stacie Crawford) is a shot organized by photographer Deane Pollock. "Stacie was actually the reason that I finished *CARMILLA*," says Summerfield. "I stayed-on as a result of her undying support, talent and professionalism."

I said to him, 'I don't want to get stuck in the B-horror world. I don't want to be one of those backyard, Camcorder scream queens.' Kevin stood by me 100%, and told me that we could share ideas regarding the risky scenes.

"See, I won't do full-frontal nudity. I have a bathtub scene, if a breast is accidentally exposed in a natural way, then I don't have a problem with that. Kevin was totally understanding [cooly smiling]... In this movie, I'll have my first on-screen love scene, you know. And, you, I'm nervous! You see, my character's a virgin and is dating David [a character played by director Summerfield]. They've come to this town together, and have already agreed to wait to have sex. One night, Laura gets into this dream-like state and goes into the wilderness where Carmilla bites her. Now she's half-vampire and

Carmilla sort of pushes her and David to make love for the first time. So it really was not a conscious choice for Laura. Like I said, I don't mind if a breast is exposed in a beautiful, essential way. I trust Kevin and Jeff Dunn; they're very supportive."

Someone leaked a story that Le Pine exploded when a crew, consisting of 20 craftsmen, was reduced to four during a Saturday shoot. It seems the actresses insisted on a closed set for a nude scene. (Never mind that the ladies vowed to personally promote *CARMILLA* at a myriad of sci-fi conventions). Bootsie Karns [yes, Bootsie] parroted the perennial bromide, "If it's done tastefully, I don't mind nudity. A lot of people are uptight, but I consider myself a sexually open woman—not a slut, and I would never do a porno. If I wanted to be a stripper, I'd be one! I think the fitting of it,

though, should be soft. Kevin is so caring and open-minded that, when we have some sort of nude scene, he right away shows us exactly how it looks on the monitor. A good director does that."

Crawford later advised me, "I should add that besides the flesh aspect of this project, I admit that spiritually, I was concerned with the vampire thing. I'm not fanatically religious or anything, but I don't want any bad karma. I don't want to bring any negative energies to myself. I'll tell you what though, like everyone else, I'm here to make a good movie. I just don't want to sacrifice my self-respect."

I wandered onto the backyard porch and finally found Le Pine standing alongside Summerfield. Both were staring at a monitor as statemen, camouflaged in pale "vampire" cosmetics, crawled on the house's roof and, on cue, flipped back-

wards to a cushion on the pavement (shotgun blasts would be added in post-production). Another fall guy tried to straddle the stair railing using only his legs. He aborted the first attempt, but, on the second try, he achieved success—not to mention a higher-pitched voice. The crew members, moonlighting as

FF scribe Jennifer Hux sweeps out the behind-the-scenes con-tempo



chefs, applauded their approval.

A deceptively simple scene, shot during the evening, earned my respect for Summerfield's direction. It all transpired in a living room as an actor, cast as a priest, struggled to resist a blood-lusting Laura. Abetted by a coterie of bloodsuckers, she attacked the clergyman. The "living dead" extras piled on top of the actor until he was buried in the couch. (A female senior citizen, who had to have been a football player in a former life, wound-up at the tip of the human pyramid.) The "priest" couldn't deliver the lines to Summerfield's satisfaction. The director did not want generic fear, he needed something intense and real. Though the crew had already lit an exterior scene to be shot later that evening, it had to be scrapped because Summerfield was still trying to exorcise clichés from the priest's performance. Covering his butt with close-ups, medium and POV shots, Summerfield stared out the screen door to see his postponed exterior scene literally wash away in a thunderstorm.

The following day, the impromptu fashion was dark circles under the eyes.

"Marina is gonna tell George Staver, who's the film's superhero. Unfortunately, he dies in the first 20 minutes."



BOOTSIE KARNs, ACTRESS

"If it's done tastefully, I don't mind nudity. A lot of people are uptight, but I consider myself a sexually open woman—not a slut. I'd never do porno. If I wanted to be a stripper, I'd be one."



Summerfield: "Bootsie Karns, as Carmilla, meets Myrnie Morgan in a nightclub. As a result of their union, Marina—formerly a victim—turns into an aggressor."

The bee-constrictive schedule was eating away at the crew. Scorching heat melted makeup. Mosquitoes were savagely getting under everyone's skin. Scenes were ripped from the script to comply with deadlines. Returning to the same house where Summerfield coaxed a performance from the priest, I plopped on the living room couch to confer with CARMILLA's Colonel Kurts, aka producer Tim Le Pine. One of Salman King's RED SHOW DIARIES had been fed into a VCR. Scenes of David Duchovny and Brigitte Bako were flickering on a muted TV set. "We're taking some lighting ideas from DIARIES," Le Pine explained, as he took a seat across from me. If you merged a Barnum and Bailey ringmaster with Lou Grant, you'd have a pretty good impression of how this guy initially impacted me. Le Pine scratched his head and shifted uncomfortably in his chair. We exchanged apologies for our abruptness with one another the previous day. But I suspect-

ed that he preferred another mosquito bite to a news journalist. His take-no-prisoners demeanor glibly reinterpreted our interview into an interrogation. Glancing at my tape recorder, he asked, "Is that thing off?" My thumb pressed the 'stop' button. Immediately, Le Pine's intimidating expression faded. Admitting an affection for popping a beer or two, he recalled, "previously working in some way or another in different projects. At one point, I was affiliated with a film starring Brigitte Nielsen, George Hamilton and Corey Feldman."

"Could you define your affiliation?"

"Well, not really," chuckled Le Pine. "But I was there. Actually, I got into CARMILLA because Kevin had been an actor in my last film, and his ideas and mine jelled so..."

"Any concerns about this project?"

Le Pine shot me a fearful of "you-should-know-better-than-to-ask." Taking a deep breath, he replied, "In some-

thing like CARMILLA, there are always problems. But that's just the way it is. The actresses are charming and...in this type of lower budget movie, there is always that gray area. I don't like all that goofy stuff."

"Could you define 'goofy stuff'?"

"Nudity. I know we need it to sell the movie in the B-market, and I want to avoid falling below that gray area where we'd not break even. I'm not really a big fan of the whole cult horror genre in general. The film with Brigitte Nielsen fell below that line of success! They had the talent to make it work and they had the crew. There was only one guy left to screw it up."

The director was likely the prime suspect but discussion on the "Brigitte Nielsen" film appeared to be closed. So I ask, "If horror isn't your bag, what's your goal in this market?"

"I wish to do an action/adventure film centered around the Washington Monument," said Le Pine. "If I want to raise \$5 or \$4 million for it though, I better have something rockin' and rollin'!" Digressing from all the movie talk, Le Pine—lighting up like Times Square on New Year's Eve—talked about his daughters, their education, dating...

For the duration of the shoot, mere time constraints prompted more pages to be literally ripped from the script. But a raw freshness prevailed. In lieu of special effects, the movie would be fueled with characterization. Resisting a commercial rubs, Summerfield opted to minimize the sex scenes in favor of a sensuous, Grimm's fairy tale milieu. It was crazy Summerfield & Co. were making a decidedly anti-Hollywood movie.

Personally, I wonder how often Hollywood goes back to its grassroots and takes a solid look at what it has become. Is the industry's battle for the summer blockbuster—and monopolization of the media—equating low-

hudget with obsolescence? The classical B-movie—not T&A crap, but boot camp training for filmmakers who squeezed stuff like CARNIVAL OF SOULS and INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS out of comparatively nothing—has faded from movie theatres. Corporate studios have replaced it with pyrotechnical gags and morphing. As far as I can see, the upcoming millennium will challenge the industry with two choices: increase the ungodly price of each film production beyond \$100-\$150 million, or create character-driven scripts for one percent of the cost. I've had a difficult enough time doing out eight bucks to see TITANIC. With budgets exponentially inflating, I wouldn't be too surprised if admission fees shoot up to \$20 by the year 2000. Thanks, but maybe I should spend the Jackson on a camera and make my own movie.

Postscript: Fed-up with compromising his original vision of CARMILLA, Kevin Summerfield insisted that his name be omitted from the credits. His association with the producer corroded into a less than amicable split. Attending this year's AFM conclave in L.A., he was "back on a plane in less than 48 hours. I got sick of the parties and the bullshit." The director is currently co-developing "an entrepreneurial unit in North Carolina called London Night Entertainment. It's exclusively for independent filmmakers who want to distance themselves from L.A."

Martina Morgan was subsequently hired for a couple of low-budget films, one in Florida and one in Vermont. Stacia Crawford, residing in New York, would like to work with Summerfield again. Bostole Karns moved to L.A. □

Summerfield was impressed with Martina Morgan's demo reel. "And her voice. We did not pay up her national number [y]. She turns from earthtone housewife into a psychotic bitch."



NICOLE DEBOER

TREK'S NEW TRILL

A VETERAN OF SCI-FI, SHE OFFERS HER PERSONAL DATA ON DAX...& HER PRODUCER RECALLS A UNIQUE AUDITION.

BY ANNA KAPLAN

It was the big buzz in cyberspace, provoking a hornet's nest of hostility: "Who'd have the balls to substitute for a departing Terry Farrell?" Finally, Paramount declared it official: Nicole deBoer had landed the role of DEEP SPACE NINE's Eri Dax. "My first day, someone came up to me and said, 'You've got some fan mail!'" laughs deBoer. "I said, 'How can I possibly have fan mail, already?' I haven't even shot anything yet! People haven't yet seen me in the role." A couple of people sent me cards, welcoming me to the show and saying things like, 'Don't worry about the fans not liking you because of how dear Jadina [Terry Farrell] was. Everyone is going to love you. Don't worry. With your sci-fi background you'll be a great addition to the cast.' I thought, 'Wow, that's so nice...a little weird, but nice.'"

The actress was also warmly welcomed by the series' cast: "I was a little nervous coming on to a show where everybody knew each other for the past six years. It's always hard trying to fit



Nicole DeBoer & Robert Patrick in an *OUTER LIMITS* episode, *Quality of Mercy*. "There's a lot of sci-fi in general now, much of it shot in Toronto & Vancouver."

in. Everybody was really great and really helpful. I felt like I had a good handle on the character, so I was comfortable that way. Pretty soon, I got to know everyone and now it's great. I get along with everybody really well. We're always joking around, which is nice, and I'm enjoying the work."

Eri Dax debuted in the

finale of *Images in the Sand*, DEEP SPACE NINE's seventh season opener. "That's right, I'm introduced at the very end of my first episode," recounts deBoer. "The next episode was my big one, where audiences found out all about this character. Eri is a young Trill who was studying to be a counselor, and she just happened to be

on the ship that was taking the Dax symbiont back to Trill. It had to be put back into a new host because of Jadina's death. It took a turn for the worse, and they needed to find a host for it immediately. Eri was the only Trill on that particular ship, so she had to take it. But she had never trained to be joined, like many other Trills have been. Now she is stuck with this thing in her. She is having a lot of problems with it because she's got, including herself, nine people in her head. It's confusing for her—mentally and physically—and it's something she's going to have to work on."

"It wasn't bad enough she's been trying to figure out, 'What am I going to do with my life, now?' I'm trying to start a career." Now Eri's got this to worry about, too. She is going to stay in Starfleet, with all these new people who had relationships with Jadina—or maybe many of the other hosts before her. She's got a lot on her plate."

So which of the DS9 cast-mates were receptive to the Trill? "Of course, Sisko was going to accept Eri because she is the 'old man.' She's Dax, his very good friend



"I agreed that Ezri Dax wasn't in the same vein as a Deanna Troi. Ezri is younger and really more messed-up than her patients and their problems."

He's very close with her and wants her to stay. She's saying things like, 'I don't know if I should. I think I should go back to training as a counselor.' He convinces me, 'Now you are over 300 years old. You've got the memories of 300 years. I'm sure they can give you some kind of special diploma for that. Why don't you come here and be a counselor?' He talks me into staying and he, of course, pulls some strings and I stay."

By the third episode, Ezri—functioning as a counselor—is saddled with the claustrophobic Garak (Andrew Robinson) as a patient. "Garak is just such a great character," enthuses deBoer. "I just really liked that episode. Andy's a great actor. I enjoyed working with him. That was my first go at counseling. The writers and I agreed, and had the same sort of vision, that it's not going to be in the same vein as a Deanna Troi [Marina Sir-

is deBoer as Dax's Ezri Dax ("She's got a lot on her plate.") 5. Cast with Maurice Dena West in THE CUBE, last year's very surreal sci-fi thriller





Captive within **THE CUBE** (L), deBoer & other abducted youths (David Hewitt), Andrew Miller seek sanctuary from a hoodo-imprint, psychedelic man. Even Williams, critic for *The Australian*, described it as "a bizarre, low-budget, Canadian sci-fi horror film. [Hitchcock] would've loved it. The set is brilliantly evocative."

tis) kind of counseling. Eeri is younger, a little newer at it. She is also now really messed up herself, which adds a little bit of comedy to it. The counselor is more messed up than the patients. Her own way of counseling is not your typical very dry, calm questions. She's got a different take on the way she counsels, but it's still effective."

The phone rings. Over and over and—"I'm getting messages like crazy from my family in Canada," grins deBoer. "They keep calling. They've been watching the reruns of the show for the past two months. They are very excited. My aunt is a huge fan of **DEEP SPACE NINE**. I didn't know she watched it every week until I got the part. She was

telling me all about Dax and everything about everybody. She said, 'It's one of my favorite shows.'"

Although new to **STAR TREK**, deBoer is no stranger to genre fans. She played a recurrent role on both **DEEPWATER BLACK**, a Canadian sci-fi series, and **BEYOND REALITY**. She's talked guest appearances on **PSI FACTOR**, **TEKWAR**,

FOREVER KNIGHT, **POLTERGEIST: THE LEGACY**, and twice on **THE OUTER LIMITS** (her most memorable episode is in disputably *Quality of Mercy*). Making her film debut in the **FROM NIGHT** franchise (specifically, 1992's **PART IV: DELIVER US FROM EVIL**), deBoer shifted from alabamers to sci-fi with her string of TV credits and a role in last year's **CUBE**. "I don't know how it happened," shrugs deBoer. "I just kept getting sci-fi work. There is a lot of sci-fi in general now, and a lot of it is shot up in Toronto and Vancouver. Sci-fi has been really good to me. It's given me a lot of work and I enjoy doing it."

Hans Beimler, **DEEP SPACE NINE**'s co-executive producer, served as an executive producer on the aforementioned series **TEKWAR**. He thought about deBoer when executive producer Ira Behr conceptualized the Eeri Dax character. "I was shooting a TV show in Canada and got this message from my manager," recalls deBoer. "He said, 'A man named Hans Beimler called. He's with **DEEP SPACE NINE**. They have a new character and he wants

After transformation into a more fully developed alien, deBoer contends with Robert Patrick in the climax of *Quality of Mercy*, an **OUTER LIMITS** episode (B16/S9). *Cinefantastique* said: "A riot on the classic episode, *Alphimere*." (B2/243)



you to put yourself on tape for it." I hadn't talked to Hans in a couple of years. I just thought that it was very nice of him to think of me, but I didn't actually think that I stood a chance. I just put my audition on tape on my personal video camera, and I mailed it down. The next thing I knew, they were flying me in to test."

Beimler recalls "first working with Nicole on a show I did in Canada called *BEYOND REALITY*. She came in to do a guest character role. She just blew us away, and we hired her as a regular on that series. I cannot be a bigger fan of hers. When Ira and I were writing the casting sides for Exri, Nicole immediately popped into mind. She was perfect but she was up in Canada. I called her manager and said, 'Why don't you send up the sides to her?' And she did the most amazing thing. She got the sides, and without any instruction from anybody—without anybody coaching her—she read the sides to a videotape camera. There was nobody there to help her. She had no one to read the other parts. It wasn't a scene that we really intended to shoot, it was just to use as a casting side, between Quark [Armin Shimerman] and Exri. But she had no one to read Quark's lines. She just did Exri's lines, all of them. It was just her side of the conversation, and it was just amazing. She convinced us that she understood the character. It's a very difficult character to understand. It's a person who suddenly has eight personalities, or the memories of eight different people implanted in her brain and hasn't been able to sort them all out yet. That's not an easy thing to play without being annoying. It was really terrific."

"She got the character," Beimler reaffirms. "That was very clear. Ira saw the tape and just gave me this look like, 'I think we found our girl.' He was really ex-



Cast on the corridor set (p. 51), deBoer admits she was "nervous" making her debut. "But everybody [I] was very helpful. I had a good handle on the character."

cited right away. He showed it to the rest of the staff, and everybody really liked her. We showed it to [executive producer] Rick Berman and he got excited about it. Then the studio got excited. There was one other candidate, another terrific actress, but everybody really felt that Nikki had made the part her own. She really understands the nature of the beast. She's a very, very gifted actress, and she was able to tune into the part that Ira had conceived."

"And there's a lot of comedy. That's another thing that she's able to do well. She knows how to throw away a line, and play it without hammering it over the head. She can play dry and she can play quirky without being annoying. Sometimes quirky charac-

ters tend to be silly or supercilious, and Exri Dax is anything but that. Nicole's able to play not only the quirkiness, the kind of interesting nature of this character, but she's also been able to give it some depth and meaning."

After dispatching her videotape to the producers, deBoer did some homework for her L.A. audition: "I never watched *DEEP SPACE NINE*. But they gave me a rundown on the character. For someone who'd never watched the show, I tried to ask as many questions as I could about it: 'What kind of people are Trills?' 'Was it an honor to be joined?' 'Can you give me a rundown on each of the hosts prior to me, including Jadzia?' 'What was Jadzia like, and what were her relationships like with each of

"I keep doing sci-fi work. I really don't know how that happened. Sci-fi has been really good to me and it's given me a lot of work. And I enjoy doing it."



these people?"

Fortunately, deBoer was a fan of D89's precursors. "I watched the original *STAR TREK* television series," she explains. "And I also watched *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* pretty religiously. As a matter of fact, I was a big fan of *NEXT GENERATION*. But after that, I moved out of my parents' house and I didn't watch much TV. But I watched *THE NEXT GENERATION* all the time, so I was very excited to become one of the *STAR TREK* family."

She laughs again. "When I was still back up in Toronto, and I heard I had the part, I would see a picture of Patrick Stewart ['Captain Picard'] and say, 'There's my uncle, Jean-Luc.' I'm in the family now. And it's very exciting." □



FATALE ATTRACTIONS

continued from page 7

bathing suit... and the cops were like, 'You're brave! Oh, please! I've gone rollerblading naked down the Venice boardwalk! This was nothing!'"

■ **Writter/director** Pat Tentolo of Shadow Productions has signed a five-picture deal with Charisma's Entertainment in Orlando. First on dock is the sci-fi actioner, **OPERATION PRISON PLANET**. Carolyn Renee Smith (8/10/11) plays Captain Sabot, the head of a futuristic, all-female militia. Her team is summoned to rescue two female soldiers who've been kidnapped by a religious sect. The prisoners are whisked to a dying race of aliens who are intent on infusing their "weak" DNA with ours. "This is not your typical low-budget genre film, where women are portrayed as victims and chased by some killer," says Tentolo. "The women are the strongest characters in the film."

PLANET will also reportedly star Rosanne Michaels (7/13) and Glenne Gilibert. Says Michaels, "I'm waiting to see the final script, and who else is cast, before I make a commitment. My character, Petbie, is one of the women who's been captured by the aliens. She's very rebellious, very hard-edged. She's very tough, totally not a victim. She starts out as almost a bully, but she softens up by the end and really bonds with the other women in the film. I think the film has a lot of potential." The script is co-written by David R. Williams and will be produced by Shadow's Patrick Coppinger.

■ **Brikkie Stevens**, FF's first cover woman, called to report she's just sold her fourth screenplay, **BURIED NIGHTMARES**, to Pacific Entertainment. An unofficial sequel to her 1980 film **HAUNTING FEAR**, Stevens will reprise her role as Victoria. "My character is tormented by nightmares and suffering from am-

nesia," says Stevens. "She's fearful that she might have committed some horrible crime, but she can't remember. She's kind of a Jane Doe in a mental institution. There's a lot of people around who have hidden agendas and vested interests in her, and she can't figure out why some people want to kill her and others want to save her."

Stevens is also producing the film and has lately been sitting-in on casting sessions in central California. "We're hiring local talent to play the day parts," she says. "Three hundred people showed up. It was a madhouse, but I got to sit on the other side of the table and hear people reading my lines and hire them. It's really a thrill. It's everything I've ever wanted!" Cast as psychiatrist Dr. Julie Harcourt in the original film, Karen Black will reprise her role in the second installment. Honor vet Christopher Lee (8/1) may appear as a sinister doctor. Stevens is currently seeking theatrical distribution for the \$800,000 film. In addition, she's shooting a new video box cover for El Cinema's **EYES ARE UPON YOU**. "It's going to be a special collector's edition that's released with additional footage and behind-the-scenes stuff," she reports. "It's a horror thriller in which I play the new girl in town who turns out to be a demon. We're doing a really fun, elaborate photo shoot—Screening Mad George's special effects studies are going to transform me into a demon for the cover rendering!"

■ **Cavewoman**, a burly comic book bombast, definitely caught our attention. Says creator Budd Root, "In a nutshell, it's a mix between a female Tarzan and *The Perils of Pauline*." Meriem, the central character, is strong enough to break the back of a Kodiak bear. Her genesis is traced back to an evil professor, who dispatched Meriem into a time warp. Plugged into 70 million B.C., she was suddenly sharing space with dinosaurs. Years pass, and Meriem finally reneges herself to speculation that she'll never see humans again, but, as a result of a government cover-up gone awry, an entire 20th-century town is dropped into her prehistoric environment. So now Meriem, aka Cavewoman, has no choice but to hang with oversized lizards and Homo sapiens.

The comic book's success has spawned a toy franchise, i.e. a total of three action figures (Cavewoman clad in variable styles of primitive leathers. Collector's hint: go for the gold). Renowned dinosaur artist William Stout will illustrate an alternate cover for an upcoming issue. For further information, tap into www.buccerentertainment.com □

FF readers prefer Carolyn Renee Smith as their #1 embodiment of Vampirella (7/16). She just may be setting the Milky Way in **OPERATION PRISON PLANET**.

Cavie comic heroine Cavewoman (5) is powerful and prehistoric, but not too queen (6). Her creator, Budd Root, describes his heroine as "a mix between a female Tarzan and *The Perils of Pauline*." She's already prompted a toy franchise.



LETTERS

TAMMY LAUREN (7:15)
Please, more martial artists. What can I say?

Actually, I just picked up a copy of the latest issue because of Kelly Hu's sexy photo on the cover, but I'm glad you included a story about her **MARTIAL LAW** co-star, Tammy Lauren—the "bun lady" who could kick Arsenio Hall's butt without breaking a sweat! And look very good while doing so, I reckon.

Well, enough of that. I was really just writing to you because I see in your "Letters" section some name/role listings, and wondered if the following would tweak memories from some of your readers: Mary Woronov (**IN THE GLITTER PALACE**), Karen Shepard (**AMERICA 3000**), Pearl Lin (**DRAGON'S INFERNOL**), Marjane Holden (**BALLISTIC**), Linda Megie (**DAY OF THE PANTHER**), Shah Guang-Li (**THE WOMAN AVenger**)...

Please do a feature on Elisabeth Dushkin of **BUFFY**, since you've done everyone else on the staff/side of the series. And I suggest you do a feature on "virtual" console-based video game femmes-de-guerre; they're getting more popular every day. So what if they do spring from lonely Tokyo-boy programmers' heads?

Marlen Perkins
Omaha, NE

(Mary Woronov's profile is included in **FF** 5:1. Marjane Holden has been twice interviewed, 4:6 & 7:6. Consult past issues for dialogue with other mesmerizing martial artists, e.g. Kelly Long (5:11), Michelle (7:8), Cynthia Rothrock (4:1), Kim-Maree Pean (5:1), "Asian Action Heroines" (3:2), Alvin Wang (7:18), Michelle Yoh (6:8), et al.)

Craig Reid's interview with Kelly Hu was hot (ditto the photo). Pardon the drab, but Hu is endowed with beauty and brains. However, I'm genuinely disturbed that the producers of **MARTIAL LAW** sacked (i.e. dismissed) Tammy Lauren, another hantion of beauty/brains. Perhaps the producers assumed that two powerful women, within a single series, would somehow

jeopardize the ratings? Let's see if the show survives with Ms. Lauren's replacement, Arsenio Hall.

Ted Catterna
Seven Hills, OH

STICKY

Regarding the article on producer Adyrenn Ashley (7:16): though I enjoyed reading it, there's one little problem. It's cited that her company, 21st Productions, produced 3 **DAYS**, 3 **HOURS**, 3 **MINUTES**, 3 **SECONDS**. Adyrenn did work on the film, but as a camera assistant. I predated the film for my company, Triple Sticks Productions. It's a minor error but a big one to me, considering I have been plugging away as a filmmaker and trying to make my own film for years.

M. David Lee III
Triple Stick Productions
tpstick@ix.netcom.com

CARNIVAL OF SOULS

To Ira Sandles—In your **FF** interview, with Candice Hibbons/**CARNIVAL OF SOULS** (7:13), you mention the film's director, Herk Harvey. Any due to the identity of the cameraman? Yeah, the guy who actually filmed the entire movie?

Take a look at the lower photograph on page 14. I can tell you who the man behind the camera is. He is my father, Maurice W. Prather, the photographer/cameraman who worked intimately with Herk Harvey and who actually filmed the entire [1982] movie, **CARNIVAL OF SOULS**.

According to the law, Herk Harvey had three years to get the film copyrighted. My father (being more of an artist than a businessman) assumed Herk would take care of this very important detail. Unfortunately, Herk didn't!

The director never obtained copyright protection, so when the film got into European hands, neither Herk nor my dad could do anything about it! (At least, that's what my father says.)

I had never heard my father mention **CARNIVAL OF SOULS** until this past year,



A few of our readers: Barbara Crampin is the busy coverage of soap and sci-fi. Check out her new photo in an upcoming issue.

and I don't even remember how it came up in conversation. As he spoke, his quiet voice seemed to boom with a deep sense of pride—he had shot what was to be a cult classic! But his pride was matched by a sense of remorse, for he had never received a cent of recognition or financial profit.

Maurice Prather had to end his film/photography career earlier than planned when he developed parositis on his hands. At age 72, he has survived quadruple-bypass heart surgery, plus a few close calls with death. Three days a week, he goes to kidney dialysis. His health has been so precarious these past five years that I, his younger daughter, finally left sunny San Diego to return to Missouri after a 15-year absence.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if my father could get some recognition for this unique, well-crafted film?

Stefanie P. Gooddaughter
Kansas City, MO

EXCERPTS

About **FF** 7:15 I loved the pic of Tiffany Shepis on page 6 (dread)...I read in "Letters" that the recent pictorial of Sheri Rappaport (7:10) "drew tons of mail." Add me to that list: she's gorgeous and smart. More please!

Terrific interview with Vir-

on Fox (7:16): but why no dialogues with her **IDLE HANDS** co-star Jessica Alba? With those bee-stung lips, she would be perfectly cast as Angelina Jolie's little sister.

Finally, I agree with your readers, how about an update on histering Barbara Crampin, the soap star/sci-fi siren (**BE-ANIMATOR**) who was featured in the very first **FF** ish?

Barry Johnson
Beltsville43878

(Ms. Rappaport has chronicled her experiences on the set of **XENA** for one of this summer's **FF** issues. Ms. Crampin's 360° audience, illustrated with photos exclusively shot by Denise Duff, will also debut later this season.)

FAN CLUBS

Send self-addressed and stamped envelopes, if you wish a reply.

CARMILLA (page 45)
<http://members.aol.com/superturme>

Cavewoman
www.basement1000.com

Denise Duff (2:4)
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Leann DeVaul (7:18, p. 7)
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